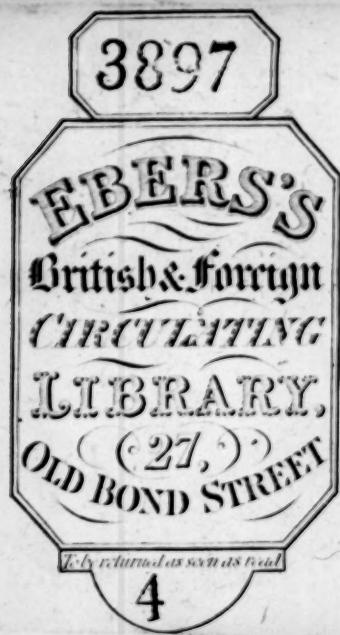
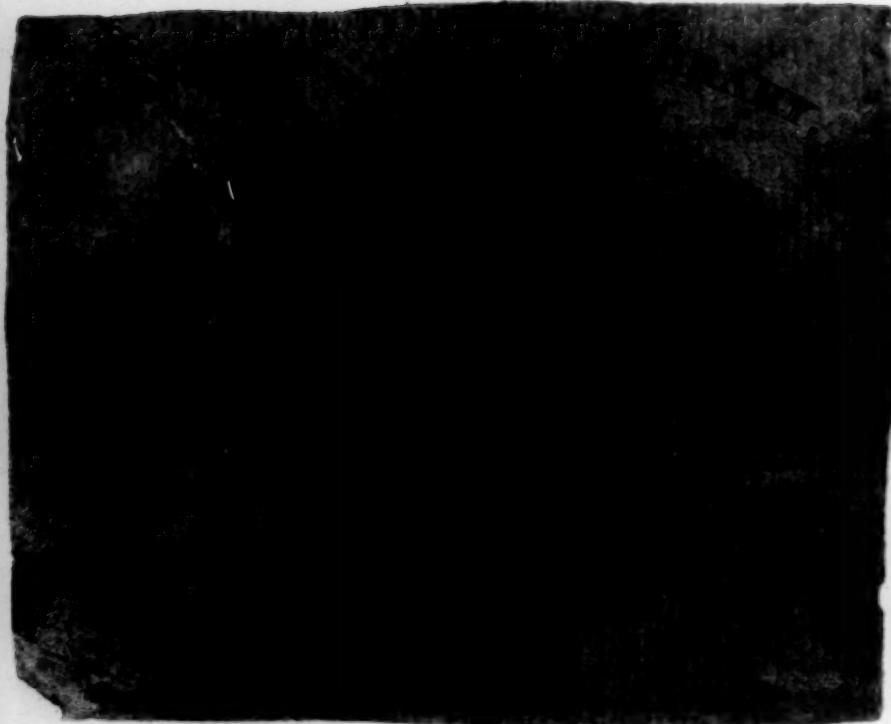


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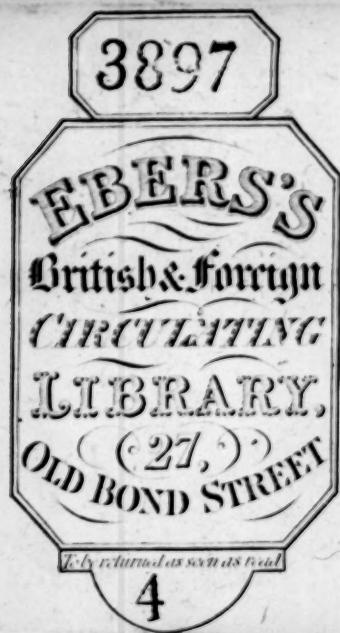


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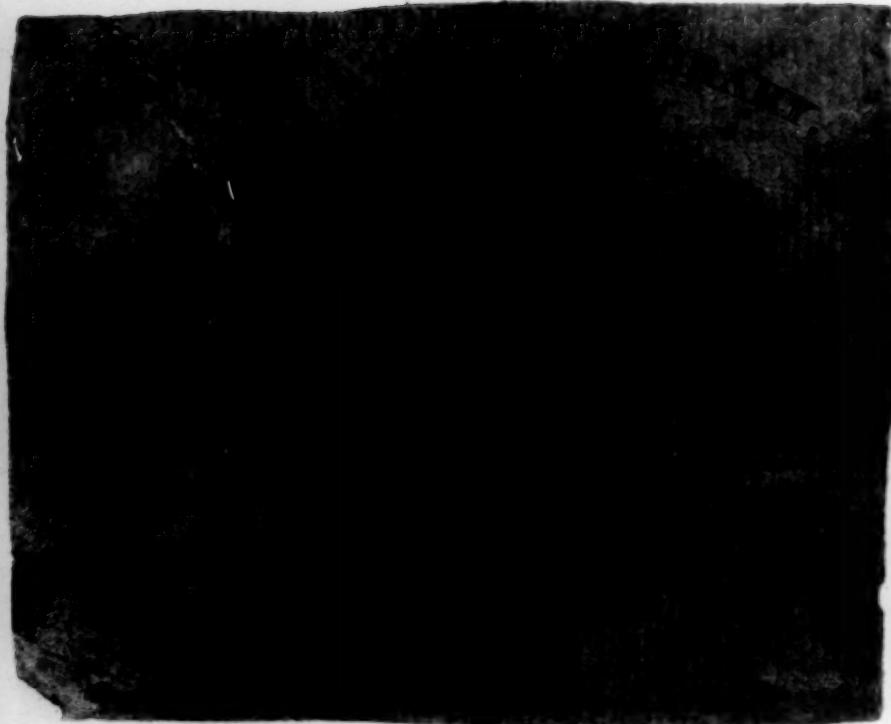


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T H E

*Solemn Injunction.*

A NOVEL.

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F R O N T I S P I E C E



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THE  
SOLEMN  
INJUNCTION.

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A NOVEL.

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IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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BY

AGNES MUSGRAVE,

*AUTHOR OF CICELY OF RABY, &c.*

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“ In a solitary chamber, and midnight hour,  
“ How many strange events may arise.”

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VOL. IV.

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M.DCC.XCVIII.



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THE

## *Solemn Injunction.*

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### CHAPTER I.

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IT is, however, now requisite I should defend my heroine from the charge of levity, inconsistency, and duplicity which may be laid against her. My readers will doubtless recollect the scuffle between Kophausen and the Earl, and that the former had in loud terms threatened revenge; at which period the rage of the latter suddenly subsiding, he put Alicia into his own carriage,

riage, and went to seek Ann. During this interval the Baron, who appeared as if attempting to escape, came up to the door, and threw a pocket-book into the chaise, saying, "Here Miss Sleigh is the book I was villainous enough to take from you whilst you slept this morning; I will not now keep it."

Alicia thinking from its resemblance it was as Kophausen said, took and put it in her pocket, whilst he was again seized by his lordship's servants.—In the hurry of spirits she was in, our heroine thought not of the circumstance, till at Kelso she was undressing for bed. She had not suffered Ann to attend her, ordering her to go to rest, she having the same cause for fatigue as her mistress. In taking something from her pocket, Alicia perceived she had a book of a larger size than her own—it then occurred to her that this was the one given her by the Baron. Urged by curiosity, and a wish to know what he meant, she hastily opened it, and

and as she perused its contents, she trembled—her heart seemed full to suffocation—as alternate surprise, resentment, and dread took possession of her. Lord Trewarne, him whom to refuse had given her such exquisite pain, was there represented as a villain of the blackest dye—that he wore the mask of virtue but to deceive—that Kophausen was a mere agent who had served to betray her into the hands of his principal. In this depository of iniquity she found the route she had been carried accurately described—the hours at which they were to stop to change horses—and even the period and very minute of her rescue were calculated to a nicety; and further learned, that if at Kelso she refused to marry the Earl, or appeared to entertain any suspicions, she was, under pretence of returning, to be carried as far into Scotland as they could, without her discovering the deception, and then she was to be put into the chaise with the locked blinds, and so conveyed to a castle of the Earl's.

Ann also, bribed by his gold, was the creature of his power—and covered, by an affected simplicity, a heart abandoned to vice—and had co-operated with the infamous Dodds, (for that Alicia found was the real name of the pretended Baron) throughout the whole. To him there were directions how to proceed in every possible occurrence—all accidents were carefully guarded against. Ann, however, was not to throw off the mask as long as it could be avoided. Alicia knew Kophausen was a villain, but here she was informed he was a subordinate one. Yet how could she credit the tale these papers told her? was it possible that Lord Trewarne, whose delicacy and nobleness of sentiment she had repeatedly witnessed, was in league with this villain? Could she believe the assertion of such a wretch as Kophausen, against the established character of the Earl, to whom Lord Morville owed his life, reputation, and fortune? Oh! it was—it must be—a scandalous—a shameful fabrication of the diabolical

bolical Baron ! She would shew him the whole—she had not heard him go to his chamber, which was beyond her's, but contiguous to it—she would ring for the chambermaid, and enquire if his lordship was yet below—he would go down and give it to him—she could not wait till morning.— Alicia found the bell in her chamber did not ring, and resolved to go into Ann's to see if there she would have better success ; and remembered, when she had chose her apartment, observing a door opened from that of Ann's into the dressing-room of her's, which way she preferred rather than going by the gallery. But ere she had turned the handle of the lock, she heard Lord Tre-warne's voice proceed from the chamber of Ann, and she answer in a familiar way.— Alicia felt as if awaking from a dream, as she listened to the conversation between his lordship and her servant ; scarce could she believe her ears received with accuracy the found her sight corroborated the truth of ; for looking through a crevice in the door,

she saw the apparently till then modest and simple Ann seated on the knee of the sentimental and refined Lord Trewarne, who was promising largely to her, when he had married or seduced her mistress.

Ann was bargaining with his lordship not to send her to Kilcraigie, for she had never liked it; this he promised not to do any longer than he could avoid, and assured her of going before winter abroad with him and Alicia.

“ But (said Ann) should she get away from you before she reaches Kilcragie.”

His Lordship said, “ though he entertained no fear of that, yet he had given, and would give, such directions at every house they stopped at, that she could not.”

Alicia had heard sufficient to convince her she had been most fatally deceived, and that she was in the power of a villain who would stop at nothing to attain his purpose, and

and, with trembling steps, returned to her own apartment, her heart rent by anguish. Lord Trewarne, the man she had supposed a model of perfection, was now stripped of this mask, and appeared a fiend in human shape ; he would never be suspected by her friends of carrying her off ; and was she at Kilcraigie Castle, a place even Ann dreaded, she had no hope of escape. How consummate appeared the art of this villain, (for so now was she too fully convinced he must be) ; never, except in the rencontre with Kophausen, had he for one moment in her presence forgot himself ; uniformly had he appeared most amiable. Alicia fully comprehended that the Earl had intended to put it out of the power of his principal agent to divulge his schemes, by shooting him ; truly was she grateful his intentions were defeated. As Dodds found what was his aim, and had, by giving her his pocket-book begun his plan of threatened revenge, she hoped he would further prosecute it, by informing Lord Morville ; on this, however, she de-

terminated not to depend, but to effect, if possible, her escape. In Kelso she knew no one ; she was certain her every movement was watched, and if she quitted the house she was then in, she knew not how to direct her steps to another ; besides, the road they had travelled was such, as without delay she could not retrace. Was she in Edinburgh, and upon the great road, where Sir Robert Bertram was well known at all the principal inns, she would not fear to wait at one of them till Lord Morville came to her, (should she escape from the Earl, and fear his again overtaking her) ; she therefore resolved to deceive where she had been deceived, and accompany him to Edinburgh, under the idea that there she meant to marry him.

Deeply did our heroine feel humiliated ; she thought she had too proudly trusted to her own powers. Lady Augusta, at Acornbank, had suspected the Earl was not what he appeared, and she had said so. Yet there, alas ! thought Alicia, I relied on my own judgment,

judgment, and with disdain did I repel the idea; ah! had I listened to Lady Augusta—had I not entertained too high an opinion of my own understanding, this would not now have befallen me.

Alicia, in the fulness of her heart, vowed if ever again she was mistress of her actions, to bear her qualities more meekly.

CHAPTER II.

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IN the morning, banishing all traces of the feelings which had agitated her so painfully, Alicia received Lord Trewarne with smiles, whilst her heart sickened at his sight; completely did she deceive both the Earl and Ann, whom at Edinburgh she employed in purchasing a dress for her, and appeared in cheerful spirits, promising Ann, though not exactly in the same style, yet almost as largely as his Lordship, what she would do for her on her marriage. Thus both were lulled into a belief that our heroine had no other idea but of becoming the next day

day Countess of Trewarne. Happily however escaping, as I have already related, and seated in the chaise which she procured at —, she laid the pistols, which she had taken from Kophausen on the seat beside her, firmly resolving, should Lord Trewarne or any of his emissaries overtake her, to defend herself; but, with the advantage she flattered herself she had in point of time, it would not be the case; for she was determined not to stop or scarce to take refreshment. Fortunately Alicia had received a sum of money the day she quitted town from Sir Robert's banker, and having put the bills in her pocket-book, in her hurry forgot, when going to Clapham, to take them out; she had now wherewith to prosecute her journey, a circumstance she had carefully concealed, and at Edinburgh had said she was totally destitute of any cash, save a couple of guineas, which she gave to Ann to purchase something for herself, whilst Alicia allowed Lord Trewarne to buy her dress.

Safely did our heroine reach London, and was set down at Lord Morville's in Harley-street about two o'clock of the third day, wearied in body and mind.

The door was opened by James, her own footman, of whom she enquired for Lady Morville.

James shook his head, and then related, "that Lord Morville's affairs were in so deranged a state he was obliged to fly, and was gone with her ladyship to France."

"What means this lumber?" said Alicia; pointing to trunks, and packed-up furniture in the entrance-hall.

"The furniture is sold, (James replied) and these trifles that are left wait to be sent for. Lady Morville ordered me, Madam, to attend you to her in France should you return, and left this letter for you, ordering me to stay in the house as long as I could on your account.

Alicia

Alicia opened the letter, in which Lady Morville advised her to marry Lord Tre-warne, had she not already done so; but that if she did not, recommended it to her to quit England for a time, as the town had made very free with her character, and that James might attend her to France.

Alicia enquired if her trunks were left in her chamber; a negative answer was given, as also to the enquiry, if any other servant was left but himself. The suspicions of Alicia already roused, she suspected every one of artifice and deceit; and she thought that perhaps even James, the long tried servant of Sir Robert, might not have been proof against the gold of Lord Tre-warne; she therefore resolved to put no confidence in him, and ordered him to go and procure her a lodging, as she would not stay, as he informed her she might, in Lord Morville's house that night.

James

James said he would go instantly to a respectable house he knew, where she might be accommodated. His mistress bade him make haste, as she did not like to stay in the house alone; but no sooner was he out of sight, than she quitted Lord Morville's, and with all speed walked into Oxford-street, where, taking a coach, she drove to the Earl of Llandorry's in Piccadilly, although she knew the family would be gone out of town, but hoped to find the housekeeper, who was a woman much respected by her lady, and who was sister to Mrs. Rowley, the housekeeper at Malieveren, to visit whom Lady Llandorry had given her leave, and Alicia hoped she would be about returning from Malieveren; nor was she wrong in her conjectures, for she found the sister of Mrs. Rowley was returned only that morning. To her Alicia confided a part of her adventures, and in return learned the total ruin of Lord Morville; yet Mrs. Rowley, who feared to shock the spirits of our heroine too much,

was

was not very explicit on the subject, though she said the report of the town was, Miss Sleigh had gone off with Baron Kophauson, which had irritated Lord Trewarne, and induced him to take the steps he had done.

Alicia revolved in her mind, whether she should attempt to join Lady Morville in France. She could not go unaccompanied, and the confusion she imagined apparent in James's countenance, with the hesitating answers he had given to her questions, joined to his having recommended Ann as his sister to her, made her by no means deem it proper he should attend her. All the families with whom she was on friendly terms were gone out of town. Mr. Meynell's house was the first place she would have thought upon as an asylum, but he was not there, nor did she even know where to address him. Our heroine therefore determined to go down to Malieveren, as there she would find the good Mrs. Rowley, and a number of servants sufficient to protect her. Lord

Trewarne would of course, she supposed, follow her to London, which he would reach, most probably, that evening; and she hoped, by setting out early the next morning, to elude him.

Alicia, thus determined, communicated her intentions to Mrs. Rowley, who offered to accompany her back to Malieveren; but this Alicia refused, thinking she could guard herself as well alone as if the good woman was with her, whose fears would only serve to increase her own. She therefore sat down and wrote a short account of her adventures to Lady Bertram, as also a letter to Lady Llandorry, apologizing for the liberty she had taken in coming to her house, and then retired to take that rest she so much required; but at four o'clock in the morning arose, and was assisted by Mrs. Rowley in dressing herself in some clothes of the housemaid's, in order to disguise her. Before five o'clock Alicia was seated in the chaise, and without stopping to sleep, she reached Malieveren  
before

before dinner the next day, to the great surprise of Mrs. Rowley, who saw with infinite concern the fatigued and agitated appearance of our heroine.

Lord Morville's valet, who belonged to one of the neighbouring towns, had been at Malieveren since his master quitted England, and from him Mrs. Rowley had the account she gave Alicia, and which fully confirmed her suspicions regarding James, who had informed Lord and Lady Morville, that before they reached Clapham, they were met by Baron Kophausen, when Miss Sleigh got out of the carriage she was in, and went into that of the Baron, ordering James to mount a horse which appeared to have been brought for him ; that they then drove back through London, and about midnight changed horses, when Miss Sleigh wrote to Lady Morville a letter James, it was certain, gave her ladyship, which informed her that Alicia could not bear the idea of the Baron leaving her ; that therefore she was now on her road

to

to Scotland where she intended to marry, and accompany to Germany the only man she ever could love.

It was in the morning that James returned to Harley-street, being, he said, only detained till his mistress wrote the letter he had brought. Soon after James returned, Lord Trewarne called at Lord Morville's, and broke out in the most ungoverned rage upon hearing the account of Miss Sleigh, and reading her letter. The Earl and Lord Morville were alone, but so loud was the former in his reproaches to the latter, that not only Lady Morville and Lady Augusta, but the servants also learned their master had lost vast sums to Baron Kophausen, which money the Earl had advanced for his Lordship, in hopes of his interest being used for him with Miss Sleigh. He declared Lord Morville was in league with the Baron, and quitted the house, swearing if by the next day he had not every shilling lent his lordship, the law should have its course.

Lady

Lady Morville was taken extremely ill, and Brunton had learned from her ladyship's woman that she deeply lamented her own imprudence, but did not upbraid her Lord: the preceding evening she had gone from Lady Llandorry's route, escorted by Lord Trewarne, to the house of one of her gambling friends, where she lost a sum far above her power to discharge, and that his lordship had offered himself as her banker. This she accepted, but in coming home took off her diamonds, and insisted upon his Lordship keeping them till she could repay him what she had borrowed: this the Earl positively refused, but at length yielded to her ladyship's entreaties, and put them in his pocket.

Lady Augusta, who preserved her fortitude whilst her brother gave himself up to despair, advised him to write to some of his father's or Sir Robert's friends, who would doubtless take up the affair till the Earl and Baronet could come over. The miserable couple

couple rejected this proposal, declaring they would not stoop to receive obligations again from any one. The following morning executions were put in force both against the house and furniture in London, and at Malton. Lord Merville, (whose person was not safe from the malice of Lord Trewarne, as the Parliament was not sitting) had, after spending two days at Acornbank, set out for France, his lady and sister accompanying him. The furniture at Malton Park, with his lordship's stud, and every thing that could be disposed of, had been sold, and the house was now shut up:—so rapid had been the movements of Lord Trewarne and his emissaries.

Alicia now fully informed Mrs. Rowley of the consummate art and duplicity of the unprincipled and abandoned Earl of Trewarne, who had assumed a character the most insinuating, the most amiable, which she now found was the exact reverse of his real one.

Alicia

Alicia agreed with Mrs. Rowley, that to guard against the schemes of this deep intriguing villain, who regarded neither difficulty nor expence, she must be very circumspect, and keep herself as much concealed as possible.

One piece of intelligence, however, Mrs. Rowley communicated that rejoiced Alicia: Brunton had taken care to bring her trunks to Malieveren, in which Lady Morville's woman had packed the clothes which James had denied all knowledge of.

Sad was the heart of our heroine when she again entered her chamber, where she poured out her thanks to the Almighty Preserver for her escape from the complicated villainy of Lord Trewarne, and humbly prayed for protection through the trials which yet might await her. From her devotions Alicia rose with more composure, and retired to seek that repose she so greatly required; but sleep hovered not near her pillow,

pillow, which was wet by the tears of tender recollection, as she thought of those happy days that she feared were to be the only ones she must ever know; but not for herself alone did Alicia feel; for her beloved Lady Morville—for Lord Morville too she was distressed; but, for the passion she had been so unfortunate as to inspire the heart of Lord Trewarne with, he would perhaps never have been led into the destructive practice which had finally ruined him: such were the reflections of our heroine, which, spite of her fatigue, prevented her sleeping till a late hour.

The next day was spent by Alicia without stirring out, but the following Mrs. Rowley proposed that they should take a walk; “for, my dear Miss Sleigh, (said she) you need not here fear Lord Trewarne, for I am certain there is not a servant in the castle who would not lose the last drop of his blood to defend you, and revenge Lady Morville; if you chuse, one of the footmen

can

can follow us, and I think you have much need of something to rouse your spirits, and this is such a beautiful afternoon; will you allow me then to prevail on you, my dear Miss Sleigh?"

Alicia consented, and her feet involuntarily took the path which led to her favourite hill, whilst Mrs. Rowley spoke to her of James, whom (she said) was always a saucy fellow, and that she never liked him, for he was always making mischief about somebody or another. "The young woman (continued Mrs. Rowley) my lady engaged to attend upon you, Miss, before she quitted the castle, has told me it was all James's lies that made you send her away; and Brunton says, he never believed Ann was James's sister, and was certain that she was not so good as she should be."

They had now reached the top of the hill, and Alicia went to that side which looked towards Malton. Whilst she gazed on

on the house, the tears dimmed her sight : “ And are all the people gone from about Malton, Mrs. Rowley ? and are poor John and Sarah gone from the lodge ? There is its high chimney peeping from amongst the trees,” said Alicia, as she wiped off her tears, and as a sigh declared to her companion what caused the enquiry ; for the care Sarah took when she was overturned by Lady Merville had never been forgotten by her.

“ O yes ! (replied Mrs. Rowley) all are gone ; but Mr. Williams (whom Mr. Bertram had charged to be kind to John and his wife) put them into a cottage of Sir Robert’s, and employs John, as I will Sarah.”

At this moment a cloud of dust was seen rising from the road, and Alicia with Mrs. Rowley wondered what could cause it, as seldom a number of people travelled that way ; soon, however, they were certified as to the cause, for through the park-gates passed a hearse, with several mourning-coaches

coaches and a long train of attendants on horseback; petrified by this sight Alicia stood motionless.

“ Good God ! (exclaimed Mrs. Rowley, clasping her hands in agony) this is—it must be Mr. Bertram come to Malieveren to be interred ! Oh ! that I have lived to see this day !

CHAPTER III.

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THE eyes of Alicia closed on the mournful sight—her limbs refused their office—and she sunk fainting on the ground; with difficulty was she recovered by Mrs. Rowley. “ Oh ! Henry ! my beloved Henry !” sighed out Alicia, and again sunk, insensible to her woes, on the shoulder of her companion: from this second fainting she, however, revived much sooner, and was informed that the procession, after having come half way across the park, had wheeled about, and again gone through the gates.—

Cheered

Cheered by what Mrs. Rowley said, our heroine now declared she was able to walk back to the Castle with her assistance, which when they reached, enquiry was made amongst the servants if any of them knew whose funeral it was that had entered the park-gates? One of the grooms who had been at Middleham, and was just returned, informed Mrs. Rowley that if it had not been for him, he believed they would have had him at the Castle by this time.

“Who! what do you mean Thomas?” said the good housekeeper.

“Why, Mrs. Rowley, the Lord there, that has sold all off at Malton; ah! he was never like to prosper.”

“Follow me, (said Mrs. Rowley, leading the way into the parlour, where she had left Alicia). Oh! my dear Miss Sleigh, here is such good news! —he is dead—he is gone! but, Thomas, come tell Miss Sleigh whose funeral it was.”

“It was (said Thomas) the Right Honourable Frederic Fitz Harman Mackenzie,

Earl of Trewarne, and Baron St. Andrews, as one of the servants told me."

"Merciful God! (exclaimed Alicia) is then the abandoned Earl of Trewarne cut off in the midst of his sins!—his death must have been sudden."

"Did you hear, Thomas, (said Mrs. Rowley) whether he hanged himself or cut his throat? for I am sure he has not died a fair death."

"Oh! I heard all about it at Middleham, for they stopped there for the people to dine, and one of the undertaker's men had said his Lordship died very suddenly at Edinburgh, and it was thought he had made away with himself by some kind of poisonous stuff."

"Well, if he died in Scotland, (said Mrs. Rowley) what are they bringing the body this way for; sure he is not to be buried amongst the late Countess of Knaresborough's family, in the vault of the Stapletons in Malievieren church?"

"No,

“ No, Mrs. Rowley, not so bad as that either, bad enough as it is. The steward came last night, I hear, to Malton, and took people from Middleham to make all right, and the body is to lay in state there, as it is at I do not know how many houses that belonged to his Lordship between here and some place a great many hundred miles beyond London, where he is going to be buried; and a good journey to him, say I, Mrs. Rowley.”

“ But what was the reason, Thomas, (enquired Alicia) of the procession coming through the park-gates?”

“ Yes, Madam, I know that too, for it seems they were all strangers to the road, and, mistaking the directions they received at Middleham, turned into the gates on the right hand instead of the left, and when I overtook them just by the great oak, and told them they were wrong, one of the men put his head out of the coach-window, and for all he was with the funeral of his master, began swearing, d’ye see Miss, the wickedest

oaths I ever heard at the drivers, who spoke such broad Scotch I could not tell what they said."

Alicia had heard sufficient, and quitted Mrs. Rowley, who appeared no way inclined to part with Thomas whilst he had one particle of intelligence to communicate.

Deeply, indeed, was our heroine shocked at the sudden death of a man whom she had so lately highly esteemed, but whom since she had found so much reason to detest. Was he inured to vice, and had his whole life been a continuation of deceit and artifice? or had his passion for her tempted him to commit crimes that were new to him, and which, as he reflected upon, appeared in their true colours; and, unable to sustain the ignominy and disappointment of his schemes, had he rashly plunged into eternity, and thus added suicide to his other crimes? In those crimes Alicia felt as if in some degree she participated; by her attention to his lordship she might have

fanned

fanned the flame of love, though undesignedly. Thus sat Alicia, ruminating on the past, and not without a dread of the future, when Mrs. Rowley entered, to enquire if she would come down, or would chuse tea in her own apartment. Alicia said she would follow her down stairs, but she soon returned to her apartment, for she could not bear the joy that sat upon the features of Mrs. Rowley, and indeed every servant, when they saw them as they passed the window in their road to Malton, to behold what to them was most truly the mockery of woe ; for Fame, though she had not exactly represented the affair in a true light, had yet not failed to do his Lordship justice, and represented his conduct towards Lord Morville, who was much beloved in the vicinity of Malton, as infamous as it really was.

Alicia felt a deep dejection of spirits ; the shock she had received, when she saw the funeral enter the park-gates, she yet felt the effects of, and the untimely end of Lord

Trewarne gave her much painful recollection. Bidding Mrs. Rowley good night, who came to her chamber, she sat sadly occupied with her own thoughts ; about midnight she heard the servants return from Malton, and soon after retired to rest. Next morning, rising at her accustomed early hour, after breakfast Alicia took her way, now not afraid of any attack from Lord Trewarne, to her favourite seat on the hill ; where, as she looked towards Malton, she distinguished the long-extended train of funereal pomp stretching across the park ; now the procession passed the lodge, and Alicia, amidst the silence by which she was surrounded, could hear the heavy rumbling of the hearse, that contained the remains of a man, who, in the course of a few weeks, had inspired her with such different sentiments. Slowly moved along the mockery of grief, Alicia at times catching, over the tops of the high hedges, a glimpse of the nodding plumes ; the whole soon disappeared, and listening till the last sound had died away on

her

her ear, Alicia turned to the temple.— “ May God, (said she, with fervency) pardon the offences of this man, which, alas ! I fear were manifold !” In the temple all remained as it did when she had been last there. Mrs. Rowley had said, “ she could not bear to go into it herself, and she had allowed no one else to enter.”

In this spot Alicia found much to call forth her feelings, and here she determined no longer to defer her visit to Oakdale, for now in safety she might venture alone ; and returning to the castle, desired Mrs. Rowley would send one of the servants to Bedale to order a chaise to be at the castle early the next morning. “ I have long wished (said she) to make a visit of a few days to a friend of my mother’s, who lives in Westmoreland, and I think this a proper opportunity.”

Mrs. Rowley offered to attend our heroine on her journey, which she refused, as also to have one of the grooms. This refusal

did not satisfy the good woman: “Brunton, (said she) Miss Sleigh, is only at Masham—you may safely depend on him to guard you; I cannot do much in that way myself, and you may not like to trust the grooms, though I believe all Sir Robert’s servants are honest fellows.” This proposal was also rejected. Would she but defer her journey till next week, Mr. Williams, the house-steward, would be back at Malieveren; yet still Alicia was resolved (she said) to go, and go unattended; her mother’s friend was in humble circumstances; she would not visit her in such a way as might shew any difference of situation; what had she to fear in a day’s journey? Tears were added to entreaties, to the infinite pain of Alicia, who, however, persevered in what she intended.

## CHAPTER IV.

EARLY in the morning our heroine was seated in the chaise from Bedale, although Mrs. Rowley had very unwillingly ordered it. How could she account to Sir Robert and her Lady for allowing Miss Sleigh to set out from the castle, where all the carriages were left, in a hack chaise, and unattended. Alicia had dressed herself very plainly, taking with her a change of clothes, and she had not forgot her travelling companions, the pistols of the mock Baron Kophausen. She passed safely the deserted hall of Oakdale,

and drove to the Cross Keys in St. Mary's Oak, where she bespoke a bed, after having drank tea, and then said to the landlady, "she thought it appeared a pleasant country, and would walk out a little."

"Ye had better not, Miss, go far, (said the good woman), it looks like rain; but if ye like a walk, ye cannot have a pleasanter one than out by our back door, where a road leads by the banks of the river to the church; but the sun is set, and it will soon be dark."

The day had been uncommonly sultry, and towards evening the sky had been covered with low, heavy clouds, from amongst which the sun had transiently broke, as it was sinking in the west, with a fiery aspect, and foretold a coming storm.— As Alicia slowly wandered along the high banks of the river, the evening loured—the air was oppressive—the birds, surprised by night, seemed conscious of fear—and were silently winging their way to their nests.—

Nature seemed to pause, and expect some great event ; but Alicia, wrapped in meditation, lifted not her eyes from the path, which brought her to the back of the church of St. Mary's, when it was so dusk as scarce to allow of her distinguishing objects. She passed through the wicket, and treading over many a mouldering heap, sought out the white stone which marked the grave of her unfortunate mother ; there Alicia knelt, and with all the enthusiasm of her character, called upon the spirit of her departed parent, if it was permitted, to listen to her invocation.

“ Oh ! may the lesson she taught, stand the sad trial—may my fortitude be proof against what I must sustain ! Oh ! my early lost—my beloved mother ! may I emulate thy gentle virtues—may I bear with humble resignation my fate ! ” Such was the tenor of the devotions of Alicia ; but, ere she rose, the livid lightning flashed from the clouds, and played along the ground ; the thunder raised its tremendous voice, and was echoed back by the walls of the lowly church of St. Mary. Alicia paused, and

as

as the thunder ceased, again resumed her prayers: "Oh! preserve, (she said) thou who commandest the elements—whose word created, and whose power governs, the universe, her who kneels over the cold remains of a mother!" Again the lightning clearly illuminated the horizon, and instantly the thunder rolled over her head; Alicia rose, but another flash struck her senseless on the grave of her mother, nor was she conscious of her existence, till she found herself borne in the arms of a man; and the rain now pouring down with violence, she was carried into the parlour, where she had drank tea. The person who had brought her in gave orders to the landlady for her to be put to bed immediately, whilst the surgeon of the village, who was sent for, gave her some medicine, which soon composed her to sleep, and in the morning she awoke without any apparent illness, and arose. "Captain Barlow's compliments to the young lady. (said a stout lad who was son to the landlady) and if she pleases

pleases, he will be glad to breakfast with her."

"Who is Captain Barlow," enquired Alicia.

"The gentleman that brought you here in his arms last night, Miss, when the thunder frightened you so."

"By all means; my obligations are very great; I wish to have it in my power to acknowledge them. Be so good as to say I shall be gratified by the pleasure of Captain Barlow's company."

The Captain, on receiving the message of our heroine, attended her in the little parlour of the village inn. He was a plain soldier looking man, apparently about fifty years of age, whose regimentals shewed he was an officer of the artillery, and his face bore the marks of service, and change of climate.

"I hope you have taken no cold; I hope (said he, looking very earnestly in her face) you

you are"—he then paused as if at a loss for words, when Alicia returned him her grateful thanks for the humanity he had shewn towards her the preceding evening.

"Talk not, (said the veteran of these matters, as with one hand he led our heroine to a seat, and with the other wiped off the tears that rolled over his deeply furrowed countenance); talk not, my sweet girl, of these affairs till you have breakfasted."

This was soon over, for neither party was inclined to do justice to the comfortable meal that was placed before them, which being removed, they sat some time without speaking. Alicia broke the silence, by enquiring how it was Captain Barlow happened so providentially to come to her relief?—He appeared incapable of speaking, but made two or three faint attempts, whilst the tears chased each other over his cheeks. It would not do—the genuine feelings of nature predominated over every form or mode of speech; he rose—he clasped his arms round

Alicia,

Alicia, and pressed her to his heart, whilst he exclaimed, “ Oh ! my dear, my beloved Eliza ! alas ! wretch that I was ! I, and I alone was the cause of all thy sufferings ! I brought the grey hairs of my parent with sorrow to the grave, and thou, sweet suffering angel, Eliza, wast abandoned ! thou wast drove by necessity to marry the accursed — the mysterious stranger ! Early wast thou called away, ere thy virtues, though severely exercised, had time to unfold themselves, and thou, my dear child, wast left to be brought up by charity ! ”

Alicia had withdrawn herself from the arms of Captain Barlow, upon whom she was gazing in astonishment ; but he, now more composed, requested she would be seated, and placing himself by her side, begged she would excuse his thus hastily addressing her :—“ Yet wonder not (said he) Alicia, at the remorse I feel, as I look on you ; for know I am the uncle of your unfortunate mother, whose sad history, if you are

are acquainted with, you will not need be told by me, that my ill conduct ruined my father, and at last, I have every reason to think, was the cause of his death, as he instantly expired on the premature news of mine reaching him ; for so a few years ago, when I visited St. Mary's Oak, after an absence of many years, I learned. I also was then informed, that Eliza had married a stranger of the name of Bouchier, a person of a most eccentric character ; that he had rented Oakdale Hall, where he kept a carriage, horses, and servants in a style equal to Sir Robert himself, yet he neither visited nor was visited by any person except the curate and surgeon of St. Mary's. When he walked, or rode out on the grounds, which was very rare, he chose the most unfrequented paths ; in short the whole of his conduct was highly singular. When he first came to St. Mary's, my father's funeral was in the church ; it was a deep snow, and Mr. Bouchier was on foot.—The latter part of the time he lived at Oakdale, I understand he was shut night and day into a room, all the

the village believed to have been haunted ever since Sir Philip's time, and in the midst of a storm of snow this mysterious husband of Eliza's again disappeared. It was reported he was drowned, and a body being found in a river, that joins that which runs through this vale, Eliza was persuaded by Mr. Kirby it was her husband's. Some months after you were born, and your unfortunate mother, sinking under her grief, pined herself to death, leaving you to the charge of Mr. Kirby, of whom report speaks also as a singular man, though skilful in his profession, and charitable to the poor, warm in his friendships and temper, which made him easily offended; but you, Alicia, doubtless recollect him, though I heard he had not long the charge of you; for that a Scotch lady (whose name I could never hear) took you from the hall to bring up: vainly have I searched, vainly advertised, and my visit now at St. Mary's was made with a hope of hearing tidings from Kirby, who no one can give any account of. Tell me

me now, my dear girl, what has become of you for so many years? have you been a poor dependant on the charity of the lady who took you from Oakdale? what brought you to St. Mary's, where I beheld you kneel on your mother's grave? I then was in the church porch, come also to pay the tribute of a late repentance over a parent's dust!"

Alicia paused; she who so lately had escaped from the open and hardened villainy of Kophausen—from the deep laid schemes of Lord Trewarne—was taught suspicion; yet the frank and open countenance, the simple manners of the veteran, sure were not assumed; no, his was the language of nature, and spoke more forcibly to the heart than the tinsel oratory studied by the Earl of Trewarne to deceive. Briefly, therefore, our heroine recounted to Captain Barlow Mrs. Dalrymple's taking charge of her, with her own change of name at the period of that lady's quitting England, and of her entering the Bertram family, whom circumstances having

having carried abroad, she had determined, during Lady Bertram's absence, to visit the place of her birth ; but begged of Captain Barlow to conceal those circumstances, and also said she at present had reasons which rendered caution so necessary, as even to make her conceal her name.

A message was now brought to this new found relation of Alicia, saying Mr. Jackson waited for him to go to Penrith.

“ Ah ! that is very true, so I intended yesterday ; but say I cannot go now.”

“ I beg, Sir, (said Alicia) you may not be prevented on my account.”

“ Will you accompany us ? I will send to North Oak for a chaise.”

“ You must excuse me, Sir ; but I shall remain at St. Mary's till you return.”

Captain Barlow sent a message, importing he would attend Mr. Jackson shortly.—

“ I am going, (said he) about making a trifling purchase, to Penrith ; a sum of  
money

money has lately become mine by the death of a relation, and a small estate, the situation of which I like, is to be sold there to-morrow, and Jackson, who understands these matters, and is an old acquaintance, has offered to assist me in buying it."

" Is this Mr. Jackson, of whom you speak, steward for the Oakdale estates ?"

This was answered in the affirmative, and Alicia begged Captain Barlow would on no account speak of her to Mr. Jackson, as she did not wish her visit to St. Mary's to be known. This was promised to our heroine, who on her part assured her uncle that at St. Mary's she would wait his return, which, he said, should not exceed two days and nights. This settled, Captain Barlow bade adieu to Alicia, who soon after being left alone, sent for the landlady, and ordering something for her dinner, enquired how long she had lived at St. Mary's ? She found her hostess was a native of the village :—the next enquiry made by our heroine was, if

Sir

Sir Robert Bertram ever resided at the hall?

“ At the hall ! Lord love you, Miss, nobody can live there !”

“ It did not, Mrs. Crofts, appear so ruinous as I passed ; and I thought it so sweet a place, that if mine, I should never leave it.”

The good woman shook her head. “ Ah ! Miss, you are a stranger in these parts, or you would not ax about the hall.”

“ Is it forbid to enquire ?”

“ No, no, not that either ; but what matter, Miss—all hereabouts knows there is something. Ay, now I see well enough, all ye fine folks from London laugh at such things ; but, Lord presarve us, had you, Miss, but seen what has been seen—marry, it would be no laughing matter !”

“ Do not think, Mrs. Crofts, I was laughing ; I should wish to know what objection it is that you allude to, which makes Oakdale-hall uninhabited ; if nothing very particular, I have a friend whom

whom I think would like to rent it, should Sir Robert Bertram be disposed to let it."

" Well then, Miss, nobody has lived in it, not even a servant, any length of time, for twelve years. Sir Robert, I believe, does not wish to let it ; Mr. Jackson, the steward, is gone to Penrith with Captain Barlow, but if you wish to know, I can ax Mrs. Jackson."

" I thank you, Mrs. Crofts, I should wish to know. As for the hall having been uninhabited such a number of years, though an objection, as it must be out of repair and damp, yet for a good tenant, doubtless Sir Robert would do something to obviate one part of the objection, and good fires would the other ; but pray what is the cause of the house standing untenanted ?"

" Well then, Miss, if you must know, I will just sit down and tell you, for I am sure Sir Robert is not the gentleman who would do an ungenerous thing, or impose on any body ; and if your friend took the hall, Sir Robert would like, I dare say, he should know

know all about it. Mr. Kirby was the last person, except servants, that lived at the hall ; ah ! poor Mr. Kirby, he was as good a soul as ever I knew till he went to Oakdale after Mrs. Bouchier died, and then he went all wrong, quite beside himself, and so was Mr. Bouchier, who married Captain Barlow's niece, old Joshua Wetherall's grand-daughter ; but you do not know who she was,—you are, it seems, a stranger here, Miss ; but poor Betsey was a bonny young creature when old Joshua was buried, and Mr. Bouchier came to St. Mary's, aye for all the world just such another as yourself ! Ah ! Lord presarve us, it was a sad thing Mr. Hammond did, to make her marry a man nobody knew nothing about ; some said this Mr. Bouchier drowned himself, others say he sold himself to the Devil, who carried him away in a flash of fire out of Sir Philip's chamber ; but you, Miss, don't know Sir Philip's chamber, but it is a room in the hall that is called that ; so then, d'ye see,

after her husband was gone, Mrs. Bouchier, Lord love you, Miss! would go, and shut herself into Sir Philip's room all night, and there came her husband, in the likeness of a great black dog, and talked to her."

Mrs. Crofts ran on with a number of similar tales, but Alicia interrupted her by saying, "she had no fear her friend would be disturbed by ghosts."

" Now I was sure you would not believe me, nor may be winnot neither, when I tell you only two or three years back Sir Robert and my Lady, with their family, called at Oakdale, just as a body may say to see what belonged to them ; and as the coach, d'ye mind me now, Miss, was going round to the stables, something came out of the wall at the corner with such a clatter, as frightened the horses, poor dumb beasts, and broke the coach, and a fine one it was I am sure, all to bits ; so then, Miss, d'ye see, Sir Robert and all of them were forced to stay all night at the hall ; I'm sure they had

better have walked up to their knees in mire to St. Mary's, than have done so."

" Why, what happened to Sir Robert from sleeping at Oakdale?"

" Well then, Miss, in Sir Philip's chamber, my cousin Joyce, her own self, told me Miss Bertram would sleep, for all she was told all about it; and there it appeared to her at night, and Sir Robert and my Lady, and all the family saw it; and Sir Robert said, for all the King's dominions he would never sleep another night at Oakdale. But sleep! what do I say? Lord help us, not a creature in the hall got a wink! no, marry, nor at St. Mary's either! Whatever it is that haunts the hall, it does not come for good, that's for sertain; for it was vexed, I dare say, at being disturbed, and would let nobody rest that night."

Alicia found that whatever caused the report at first, nothing now could happen relative to Oakdale, that was not, at St. Mary's Oak, attributed to supernatural agency; and reminded Mrs. Crofts the hour

would soon arrive when she had wished to dine, adding, "if the keys of the hall could be procured, and she would walk there with her, she wished to go through it, that she might be able to inform her friend regarding the apartments."

"All the grand furnitory is gone, Miss, and what is there to see, Lord love you, but a few old pictures? But if you wish to go, our Joe shall go with us, and I dare say Mrs. Jackson will let me have the keys for a word speaking; so I'll go see after the dinner, that we may not be benighted at Oakdale, like Sir Robert and my Lady."

So completely was the mind of our heroine engrossed by her purposed visit, that she had little time to reflect upon having met with her uncle, for that he was so she could not doubt.

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CHAPTER V.

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ALICIA set out in the afternoon for the hall, accompanied by her simple hostess, and her son Joe. During their walk, Mrs. Crofts entertained Alicia with a second edition of her morning's conversation, at which Joe laughed, and wished the ghost would but appear to him; and when they reached Oakdale, boldly did Joe turn the key in the outward gate, whilst his mother, keeping close behind our heroine, peeped over her shoulders into the court, whose appearance fully declared the hall had long

stood uninhabited. The grass had grown through the joinings of the chequered pavement, which led up to the entrance, between what was formerly a smooth lawn on each side, but now a high meadow ; the yews that grew at the corners of these square plots of ground had lost their conic form, and some were quite decayed by age and want of care ; the fruit-trees had fallen from all support, the jeffamine, that at this season was seen covering the walls with the highest green, now hung from them dry, sapless twigs ; and the curious painted window in the great hall, loosened from its fastenings, flapped to and fro with the wind.

Joe tried the key in the door of the saloon, but it would not move. " I dare say this lock (said he) has not been opened since Sir Robert and my Lady staid all night here, when the coach overturned amongst the stones laid to mend the road. Well, we will try the hall-door." There access  
was

was easy, and once more Alicia crossed the threshold of Oakdale.

“ Now this, in my mind (said Mrs. Crofts), is the most curiousest place in the hall, and was I you, Miss, I would go no further.”

“ I shall undoubtedly see all the apartments, but by no means wish to take ye, Mrs. Crofts, if you do not chuse, as I am not afraid of encountering the ghosts.”

“ Marry, forbid, I should let a sweet young creature like you go alone, and I stay here! No, no, I will go with you.” She then led the way to Alicia, who praised all she saw in a house, every corner of which brought back to her mind some painful recollection.

The wind was loud from the west, to which quarter the vale of Oakdale opened, and it blew through the house in a way that terrified Mrs. Crofts; as yet her son had shewed no other signs of fear than what was exhibited on his countenance. Alicia also

found a kind of dread steal over her, which she strove in vain to subdue. When they reached the door of Sir Philip's chamber, she attempted to open it, but found it was fastened.

“ Have you the key of this room, Mrs. Crofts ?”

“ Nay ! why, Miss, for sartain you are not for going in that room ?”

“ Why not ?”

“ Because it is, d'ye mind me now, Miss, locked up.”

“ I perceive so, therefore ask for the key.”

“ I dare say the key is not here (said Mrs. Crofts, turning the bunch over which she held) ; this, Miss, is Sir Philip's chamber, all Oakdale should not tempt me to go in ! No, I am sure the key cannot be here, why the room was locked up by Mr. Jackson after the night Miss Bertram got the great fright in it !”

Alicia took the keys, whilst her hostess wept and entreated; but finding no effect was produced by her admonitions, said she dare not stay, for she would warrant it would come out.

Alicia at length found the key, when Joe observing the door open, and having no mind to wait the appearance of the ghost, said, "he would go and see what had become of his mother, who was terribly frightened."

Our heroine, thus left alone, paused on the threshold; and had not motives stronger than curiosity urged her to proceed, she would have followed Joe, whose hasty stumbling steps she heard on the stairs. With a kind of painful effort she threw back the door, and entered the room; it exhibited the same appearance it did when, with Miss Bertram, Alicia saw the pallid form in the glass; the bed was unmade, the ashes and cinders filled the grate. She passed into the

midst of the chamber, without venturing to raise her eyes to the dark wainscot, or throw them on the mirror which had shown the ghastly countenance. Now she looked round her, slowly turning about ; the steps of her simple companions were no longer heard—all was silent. Alicia paused, as if fearing to break it, when she imagined she heard her own name pronounced, and fled into the gallery ; but instantly ashamed of her fears, with a firmer step returned. “ Does this become (she softly ejaculated) the child of Eliza, who here, whilst yet almost an infant, was taught the lesson of fortitude, which she forgets to obey ! ” She opened the closet, and found she yet remembered the way pointed out by her mother to enter the concealed apartments ; she then quitted Sir Philip’s room, shut the door, and put the key in her pocket. At the foot of the staircase she met Joe, but his mother was in the hall ; Alicia requesting the young man to go there, took the opportunity of entering one of the rooms which fronted the garden, and unfastened

unfastened the shutters of the windows, and then joined the terrified pair in the hall.

Mrs. Crofts proposed leaving the house, and congratulated our heroine in escaping out of Sir Philip's chamber as she had done. Joe locked the door, and internally rejoiced at having preserved his character for courage, without being obliged to enter the haunted chamber, whose unhallowed threshold had never been crossed since Alicia had with Henry visited it, the morning after she and Miss Bertram slept in that room; Mr. Jackson having locked it up the next day.

Alicia said she ought also to see the gardens, but Mrs. Crofts had not the key, and said every thing was run wild. "The weeds were (said Joe) last week, as high almost as the yew hedge which runs across, just below the hall."

"Ah! it is a grievous thing, Miss," said Mrs. Crofts, still alluding to the mischief-making ghost.

It was beginning to grow rather dusk, when our heroine again reached the Cross Keys. Fatigued by her walk, and wearied by the incessant prattle of her hostess, she went to her chamber, where she made a strong effort at composure of mind, and soon retired to rest. At an early hour she again rose, and fervently recommended herself to the protection of the Almighty ; she then breakfasted, and putting a small bottle of wine and some biscuits, with candles, and means to procure a light (all which she had brought from Malieveren), up in a handkerchief, and with the pistols of Kophausen, or rather, indeed, Lord Trewarne, in her pocket, she quitted the village inn, telling its mistress she had recollecteced a friend in the neighbourhood, whom she wished to visit ; and should Captain Barlow return before her, to inform him so, but hoped to be again at St. Mary's to sleep. Thus Alicia set out with more fortitude than she had dared to hope would be her's on her long protracted visit to Oakdale-hall.

“ I

“ I am going (thought she) to obey the last injunctions of my beloved mother, and the idea of fulfilling my duty cheers me ; why should I ever have feared to enter the concealed chambers ? Would a parent, anxious for the future welfare of a child, expose that child to any possibility of evil, which her tenderness could either foresee or avoid ? I have given credit to idle superstitious tales—I have allowed them to dwell (although I was not sensible of it) on my mind.”

The morning was clear—the birds sung forth their wild notes from every thickened hedge—and the woodbine’s luscious scent perfumed the air.—The road Alicia took was one she recollects having gone with Mr. Kirby, in her last visit to him ; it led, by a circuitous path from the village of St. Mary Oak, to the hall, winding along the rocky banks of the river, which passed near both: this was a way little frequented, and safely, without meeting any one except a  
parcel

parcel of chubby faced children, busied seeking bird nests, she reached Oakdale.— The gates all round were secured, but she found out a place in the wall of the terrace that was broken, and over that she mounted; there, however, she lingered not, resolving she would avoid, if possible, giving way to recollections that might weaken her mind, and she ran over the high grass that clothed the side of the once smooth shaven slope of the terrace, and with the same haste passed along the neglected walk, that brought her to the window she had the preceding day unfastened:—throwing up the sash, she leaped in, then took out her pistols; when having again secured the window, in opening the door of the room, she supposed she heard the echo of some steps on the staircase. Alicia paused, and stood for the space of a few minutes with the door on a jar, in a listening attitude, but all was still.— Ashamed of her fears, she proceeded along the stone passage, ascended the staircase, and passing through almost the whole length of the

the gallery, reached Sir Philip's chamber, opened the door, and went in; going towards the window, to lay on the table her bundle, that she might prepare for entering the concealed apartments, she perceived the casement yet stood open by which Mr. Bertram had entered again the apartment. With a trembling hand Alicia closed it, a deep and tremulous sigh announcing this circumstance was not unremembered by her. The curtains of the bed, which had remained closed from the time she had slept there, were heard by Alicia to draw back: she lifted up her eyes, and saw advancing, from that end of the chamber, the Earl of Trewarne, whilst his countenance and manner wore an appearance altogether new to her:—" Now thou art mine ! (exclaimed he) nor man nor devil shall take thee from me ! here thy arts will be in vain !"

Alicia gave a shriek of surprise, but instantly presented, ere she had a moment to reflect, a pistol at his Lordship; she drew the

the trigger, as fearless he advanced ; the Earl staggered and fell ; immediately two of the people, who had attended on him in the Scotch expedition, entered, and raising him from the floor, laid him on the bed, to all outward appearance dead ; but his valet used means to recover his master from what was but a fainting fit, and then pulled off his coat to examine where he was wounded ; the Earl was in violent pain, and a very considerable effusion of blood had taken place. Our heroine would have left the room ; but far from being allowed to do so, was compelled by the valet of Lord Trewarne to remain, where she saw all his operations.— The ball had passed through the shoulder of the Earl, and lodged in his back, for so his valet, who had some surgical skill, declared. He then tore the bed linen, with which he bandaged up the wound, in doing which Alicia was obliged to assist. This done, his Lordship was carried by his servants, in the blankets, into another chamber, where

the

she understood he had slept the preceding night.

Alicia now thought she would escape, and was about descending the stair-case, when Watkins, the Earl's valet (having conveyed his master into his chamber) overtook, and insisted upon her returning.—“ Give me up (she exclaimed) to justice ! patiently will I abide the decision, but I will not wait here Lord Trewarne's recovery from wounds justly inflicted !”

“ Here, however, Miss Sleigh, you must be obliged to remain at present ; if my Lord recovers he will provide a more cheerful habitation for you ; if not, you are better here till he dies, for in that case you will have worse lodgings in Durham goal, where you will, in good time, have the justice you ask ”

Alicia saw, unless she employed her other pistol, there was no chance of resisting ; she therefore suffered herself to be taken back

back to Sir Philip's chamber, where she was shut in, and heard the door fastened, being (as she supposed) nailed up, or rather a staple drove in, to which a padlock was hung.

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## CHAPTER VI.

OUR heroine, whose promptitude in danger I have already had occasion to relate instances of, lost no time in deliberation; but when she heard Lord Trewarne's people quit the door, she placed all the furniture the room contained, which her strength was equal to removing, against it, and then fastening the remainder of the bed clothes together, and securing one end of them to a large cabinet, she threw the other out of the window, by this feint hoping to prevent any search being made in the room. She then,

then, with her remaining pistol, and a lighted candle in her hand, opened the closet, unloosened the bolts, and passed into the blood-stained chamber, again securing the partition, and closet door.

“ Oh give me ! (she exclaimed, as she passed through the chamber without raising her eyes) Oh grant me, thou everlasting and Omnipotent Being ! resolution to sustain myself, should the crimes which here have been committed and concealed, be this day revealed to me ! Thou who for a season oft suffers the guilty to flourish—Oh ! grant me prudence to conduct myself in an undertaking in which I, perhaps, am selected as an humble instrument of thy justice !”

With caution did Alicia descend the narrow staircase, and reached the vault where she had been led so many years before by her mother. The gloomy solemnity of the scene, the deep, the bitter remorse expressed by the black hangings, made her

for

for a moment hesitate ; but rousing herself, she lifted, as directed, the embroidered pall, beneath which she found the key she was to use ; to it was affixed a slip of parchment, on which she saw written :—“ Dost thou then, Alicia, venture here alone ? and darest thou, stimulated by a parent’s injunction, brave the gloomy horrors that surround thee ? If so, I augured, though fondly, yet truly, my Alicia soars beyond her sex or age ! Go then ; a mother’s last blessing waits on thy steps ! Go, my daughter, and learn what my care for thy happiness concealed from thy tender age ! ”

“ I ought (said Alicia, as she again ascended the stairs) to dare all—every thing—when so commanded.” She reached the highest room, whose only furniture was the large chest she came in search of, the key of which, however, was not wanted, for the lid, though closed, was not locked, as it lifted up without turning the key ; all the chest contained was the papers, almost mouldered

mouldered into dust, which had been copied by Mr. Bertram, and the portrait which he mentioned. Alicia examined it with much attention—it was undoubtedly extremely like Sir Robert, yet the hair was of a different shade, and the expression of the countenance so different, it surely could not be intended for him, for the portrait wore a look of deep dejection, which ill agreed with that appearance of libertinism which must have marked the features of Sir Robert at that period,—a character that most certainly he never bore, and Alicia thought could never have merited. She felt at a loss how to proceed; this was the place she was commanded to search, and here she expected to have received a more full account. Surely some persons had found means, after Mr. Kirby had quitted the hall, to enter those concealed chambers; and breaking open the chest, had carried away the contents.—Once more she examined the chest, and saw its apparent depth within corresponded not with its outward height; again she recalled her mother's injunctions,

injunctions, and applied the key to the lock; the side of the chest gave way, and fell down, disclosing another lock which the same key opened, and Alicia pulled out a drawer stuffed with papers, bundled up, and indorsed.—The first that attracted her attention was a letter addressed to herself, in the hand-writing of her mother, which contained a brief account of what is already known to my readers:—the death of her grandfather—the arrival of Mr. Bouchier at the time of the funeral—the kindness of Mr. Hammond and Kirby, together with her marriage, and several particulars relative to Mr. Bouchier whilst he lived at Oakdale—his disappearance from Sir Philip's chamber, with copies of the letters written by him to his wife and Mr. Kirby—and the reasons Eliza had for believing his death.—Next she related the seclusion she practised in Sir Philip's room, chiefly with a kind of latent hope concerning Mr. Bouchier's return, as Martha (who she supposed had been sworn to secrecy regarding the concealed chambers,

or

or perhaps had only suspicions regarding them) so far stimulated her curiosity, and flattered her wishes. Thus days and nights were spent by Eliza in searching for some private passage by which her beloved husband had so mysteriously quitted her, and by which she was led to hope, from Martha's hints, he might again return ; for she had known as strange things happen since she had lived at Oakdale.—In these minute and repeated investigations did Mrs. Bouchier at length discover the way into the bloody chamber, and by degrees explored more of those gloomy vaults and passages beneath them. Those Alicia had been shewn ; the large chest attracted her attention—she found it full of papers of infinite importance ;—to them she refers Alicia, saying she will find them arranged in proper order for her perusal, and in them she will also find the reason explained of the mysterious conduct practised by both her parents. Alicia opened the first paper, which was marked No. 2 ; it was a letter written by her father, and addressed to Eliza.

## CHAPTER VII.

“ **I**F hereafter chance should conduct you hither, Eliza, as it did me, you will then learn my reasons for forsaking you, perhaps never to return. I ask your forgiveness, though I cannot obtain my own—I ask your pity too Eliza, for him whose sorrows, whose accumulated miseries have driven him to distraction! Surely I was marked from my cradle as the sport of fortune; though wretched myself, I have endeavoured to alleviate the woes of others. I despised riches, except as they allowed me to diffuse happiness to those around me; I loved virtue and

and strove to walk uprightly ; yet, alas ! Eliza, how far have I now strayed from the path. If I should return (yet I scarce dare hope on the subject) you will learn who has been your husband, under the feigned name of Bouchier ; under that name I was beginning to taste of the happiness I lost under my own ; but it is gone, Eliza, it is passed away like a dream—it will never revisit me.—But I would wish to be methodical, I would wish to inform you of many things ; but my brain is unsettled—all ideas are lost save one, which presses painfully on me, bringing with it your image, Eliza, to torture me.

“ Recollect you once said the aspect of Sir Philip’s chamber was preferable for a winter room to that we occupied ; I went into it, in order to examine what alterations would be necessary, and what furniture should be ordered for it ; I meant to have made the alterations without your knowledge, and thus pleasantly have surprised you. The size of the mirror, and its large silver frame, arrested my eyes ; I advanced up the room towards it ; a deep groan

issued, as if from beneath my feet, and I beheld a pale ghastly countenance in the glass. I turned round, yet could not distinguish what had caused the reflection I had beheld, although I carefully examined the room for some person I imagined concealed in it ; again I advanced towards the glass, as I had done before, but saw not the figure. Aware it was a deception of some kind, although I know not how it was conducted, I resolved to search it out, and for this purpose spent a considerable part of several days, at times almost yielding to the belief so firmly established at St. Mary's regarding this chamber ; at length I found out the spectre, which after an interval of a week was again visible to me, yet I spoke not of it to you, Eliza, and determined, if in my power, to discover the cause of this mysterious appearance. Again I was busied in my researches ; again they succeeded ; I entered the concealed chambers by the way I suppose you must, nor need I recapitulate what horrid sights have here appalled me ; here, Oh

Eliza !

Eliza ! did I learn what drives me forth once more an exile from friends and home.

“ I have dared to meditate deeds the most atrocious ; for as I read those accursed papers, reason fled. More collected, I then resolved never again to behold you, till I could do so without guilt—yes, Eliza, I abandon you, and with you all hopes of happiness : my head is yet light—my ideas confused—no, I will not dare again to see you. Alas ! how can I have courage to pronounce, Adieu ! how say to you I am your father ; for true, I fear it is too fatally true, are the accounts I have read, and which are contained in these papers ; you too will read them, and you, Eliza, if hate can exist in that gentle heart, will be taught to hate me. I would have destroyed in my first transports these records of crimes at which humanity shudders ; but as I grew more calm, I remembered I had no right—was not authorized to do so.

“ I have written to you, Eliza—I have also written to the benevolent Kirby :—these letters will inflict pain. Alas ! why is it I am thus marked out, as it were, for vengeance ? I am wretched—I am yet worse. I now, Eliza, am guilty of a crime heaven and earth alike reprobate !—no, I will not behold you ; unless as a wife, you are again clasped to the heart of Frederick.”

“ Oh, my father !” sighed out Alicia, “ intentionally you could never do wrong ! Ah ! what a fatal chain of circumstances have concurred to render both my parents wretched ! My father, like my mother, surely was most amiable ; dear is her memory to me ; and thou, my unfortunate father, thine, of whom till now I scarcely have been able to form an idea, shall not be less so !”

Alicia paused ; she shuddered at the horrid recollection—“ Mr. Bouchier and Eliza—mother, sister ! Nature seemed to stand aghast at this union ; and Alicia stood, as if irresolute

irresolute how to proceed.—“No, I will not,” thought she, “search into this terrible mystery; already I know sufficient.

So many, and such strange events had quickly followed each other during the last weeks of our heroine’s life, upon which she had not leisure to reflect, that, as they mingled in her brain, it appeared a perfect chaos. First, she had learned William March had been falsely imprisoned, whilst the enemies of him and Sir Robert had used his name in carrying on an expensive law-suit, founded upon a strange, mysterious, but unjust claim. Alicia had herself been forcibly carried from her friends by a man she had every reason to believe a thorough bred villain, from whom she was rescued by a nobleman, whose pleasing and insinuating manner had sunk deep in her heart, and whose supposed virtues she almost worshipped. She is urged to marry him by letters from her dearest friends and benefactors; yet she refuses, her heart being guarded by its early and powerful attachment to Henry Bertram. At this period

she learns Lord Trewarne's diabolical views, and, feigning compliance, escapes; her hurried journey to London—her surprise and sorrow for Lord and Lady Morville, who on her account had been ruined by the Earl, next succeeded; and, ere at Malieveren she had leisure to recover her fatigue of body, and her mental exertions, she views the pompous funeral of Lord Trewarne, whose death, she learns, was caused by his own hand. Free from constraint or dread, she sets out for Oakdale. At St. Mary's she meets the only relative she had ever beheld, except her mother, at a time she is so strongly agitated with hopes and fears; it scarcely had the power of more than momentarily interesting her: she reaches Oakdale, prepares for obeying the SOLEMN INJUNCTION of her mother, when he, whose untimely end she had deplored, starts on her astonished sight;—with a kind of instinctive movement (for sure it was not an act of reflection) she shoots the man whose crimes she was aware required length of time for repentance:

repentance: she is again his prisoner, but instantly almost gets beyond his reach, and is shut into horrid chambers, whose terrors had never once ceased till then to appal her; but now her senses seemed as if blunted, and the keenness of her sensibility to have lost its acuteness of feeling.

Thus stood for some time our heroine bending over the drawer, whose contents were so highly important to her. At last Alicia shook off this kind of stupor, and drew forth a manuscript of some size; it was marked No. 3, and entitled, "The Confessions of the wretched Penitent, Mildred Bertram," and addressed to Sir Robert Bertram, her nephew. The first pages contained strong expressions of remorse and deep contrition, and attributed her crimes to the wrong bent her mind in early life received: she then began a history of her life.

CHAPTER VIII.

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## THE CONFESSIONS OF MILDRED BERTRAM.

“ I WAS the eldest of four children of Sir Henry Bertram. My mother died when my brothers were yet infants ; I was my father’s favourite, and indulged in every wish of my heart : thus I grew up without experiencing contradiction. I was addressed by a gentleman of considerable expectations, eldest son to Lord Masham, and imagined I was secure in the conquest I had made, when I danced with him at an assembly in a neighbouring town, where he was struck by the charms

charms of a Miss Bryant. My empire was at an end ; I did not again see Masham as a lover. His father soon after died ;—he came into possession of the title and estate, and offered himself to Miss Bryant ; but she refused, and by so doing, perhaps more fully raised my hatred than had she become Lady Masham. I have yet more material crimes to confess, as here I might relate the pains I took to sully the reputation, and ruin the happiness of a woman, amiable as she was lovely ; her parents were dead ; she was dependant upon friends, who threatened to forsake her, did she persist in her refusal of Lord Masham ; but she remained resolute. Ere a year had elapsed after I lost my lover, Sir Henry died, and left me and my younger brothers dependant on his eldest son, without any other provision than what he chose to make out of the entailed estate. Bertram Castle was little more than a heap of ruins, and a long list of debts was left by Sir Henry to his heir, which, honesty required should be discharged. Alas ! with

grief, with shame, do I now recall the passions which rent my soul, when, a month after the interment of our father, Sir Robert introduced, as Lady Bertram, to me at Oakdale, Miss Bryant, who was, of all created beings, my aversion.—Conscious of having injured her, I knew that, was her disposition like my own, she might, without difficulty, work upon the easy temper of my brother, and exclude me his favour. Miss Bryant had been married to my brother some time previous to Sir Henry's death, although it had not been revealed. Ah! how different was the conduct of this amiable woman to mine! she saw my confusion, but developed not its cause, imputing it to the remembrance of my propagating some calumnies that had reached her ears. By every act of attention, she strove to banish from my mind all such recollections; yet still she saw the gloom of discontent hang over me, and resolved to make me at peace with myself, if in her power.

“ One day when we were alone, she spoke of Lord Masham, declaimed against his fickleness, and at length, with much guarded delicacy, mentioned the stories that had been circulated to her prejudice, and said she attributed them to a passion too powerful to be resisted; and that, had a rival interfered with her in Sir Robert’s heart, she would have gone greater lengths to have regained it.—‘ Sir Robert, my dear sister, tells me you love me. Is he not mistaken? I judge, Mildred, by my own heart, which loves you most truly; let us not look on the past—give me your confidence. Are you unhappy?—in me you will find a friend, warmly, sincerely interested for you.’

“ Instantly I resolved to conceal my hatred, and rising, embraced Lady Bertram.—I wept to deceive. From this period, nothing could exceed the attachment I professed for my sister; extolling her in a way she highly merited, whenever I imagined my praises would again reach her ear.

“ Lord Masham, who hitherto had never resided at Thorpe Castle (his seat in the neighbourhood of Oakdale) now scarcely ever quitted it, even staying there without visiting London, during a winter remarkable for its storms. Lady Bertram had prudently proposed a plan of economy, which, if adopted, would in time enable my brother to discharge Sir Henry’s debts, and allow him to provide for me, and in the mean time to allow me an annuity for clothes. Agreeable to this plan, little company was kept at the Hall, where Lord Masham had become a constant visiter. Sir Robert and he were almost inseparable. To me his Lordship behaved in a way that convinced me he penetrated my very soul, saw through my assumed character, and heartily detested, whilst he treated me with politeness. How different was his manner to her, whom I never ceased to look on as a rival : I saw, or imagined I saw, Lord Masham still loved Lady Bertram ; but, afraid of giving her uneasiness, he concealed those sentiments

of tenderness; and whilst his whole soul seemed engrossed by love, his approaches were made to her as to a being of some superior order.

“ Thus passed away the first year after the death of my father; my soul sickening at the amiable qualities which I strove not to emulate, equally as at the well-merited happiness of Lady Bertram; and whilst she was abridging herself of many indulgences, suitable to her station, in order to render me independent, I lavishly expended, in foolish and expensive trifles, the allowance made me by Sir Robert, which, through her instigation, was larger than was consistent with the frugality otherwise observed. For the promised independence I waited with impatience, and at last determined upon hastening the period when I should no longer be under restraint.

“ The general and prevailing character of the Bertrams is an unsuspicious easiness of

temper, that would rather wink at imposition, than submit to exertion : this, more than actual extravagance, had deranged, by degrees, the affairs of the once wealthy family of Oakdale ; none of whom could possess this easiness of disposition in a more eminent degree than my brother, Sir Robert. The rents of the estates were kept in an iron chest, a key to which I had procured during the life-time of Sir Henry, and now resolved to make a more frequent use of it than I had done ; yet still the unsuspecting Baronet did not suspect any one had access to his cash but himself. ‘Mildred,’ said he one day to me, ‘I fear I shall never get Sir Henry’s debts paid, much less render you independent ; for, notwithstanding all mine and Lady Bertram’s economy, I do not know how it can happen, but, out of last year’s rents, I paid 200l. of these old bills, and this half year I have liquidated nothing, and have but 30l. left in my strong chest, and it wants a fortnight to May-day.

“ I expressed my surprise, and with Lady Bertram hinted at the possibility of some person in the house entering the closet where the chest stood, and finding means to open it. This, Sir Robert said, was not possible ; for the locks were of such a nature as effectually secured the honesty of his servants. ‘ We will, however, if you please, Sir Robert, keep so exact an account of our expenditures as will better enable us to judge ; and also an additional lock, if you object not, had better be added to the closet door.’ My brother agreed to comply with this advice of Lady Bertram’s, which for the future prevented my visiting Sir Robert’s cash, and gave me a further cause of hatred to the amiable Alicia, who now proposed to my brother a further diminution of expence. ‘ I will (said she) be in future my own house-keeper, and one of the housemaids may be very well spared ; I prefer riding on horseback to a coach, so I am certain does Mildred ; but from you, Sir Robert, I had no right to expect any other conveyance but a horse,

and

and if we do not keep a coach, and have fewer men servants, we shall have pleasanter reflections than those can bestow in discharging what I deem a necessary obligation.'

" Sir Robert would not agree to what he deemed a degradation, nor could he bear the idea that Lord Masham should behold the woman he would have preferred to all her sex, subjected by her refusal of him to this disagreeable situation.

" I had formed other plans, other schemes for the misery of this amiable woman, which I now resolved to put into practice; and by degrees had I already began to infuse suspicions into the mind of my brother, regarding the motive which prompted Lord Masham to reside constantly at Thorpe, a seat that had been abandoned by the family for some time. His frequent visits at Oakdale my wicked ingenuity often contrived should be made when Sir Robert was absent, and I took care that at different times on

his

his return home, he should find his Lordship alone with Lady Bertram, whom I would draw into praising Lord Masham for his pleasing address, and those accomplishments in which he far excelled my brother; and when her Ladyship was absent, I have before Sir Robert artfully turned the conversation upon Lady Bertram, till in speaking of her Lord Masham so far forgot himself, as to break out in enthusiastic terms in her praise. In the summer Lady Bertram brought an heir to Sir Robert, who lavished on the mother and lovely infant the fondest attention. The colour of Sir Robert's hair, though at this time a bright chefnut, was when an infant red, as I well remembered, and such was the colour of his child's; such also was that of Lord Masham's.

“Have any of your family red hair, Lady Bertram?” said I one day in the presence of Sir Robert. ‘Oh, no! (said the unsuspecting Alicia) the Bryants and Barlowes both have universally dark hair; I am sure this

this little fellow could not have those fiery locks from me ; he must inherit them, Mildred, from the Bertrams.' 'Indeed, my sweet sister, you are deceived ; not from the Bertrams ; look at the pictures in the gallery ; not one has red hair, nor any of the name I ever heard of.' 'I hate the colour, (said Sir Robert, in a tone quite unusual with him) I detest it ; I hope the boy will not, as he grows up, have red hair ; Masham would be handsome, was not his that colour.' 'Oh, (said I laughing) it is, I am sure, sister, from your looking so much at his Lordship, that the child's hair is red. Sir Robert at such another period you must not allow him to come to Oakdale.'

" My brother had fixed his eyes on Lady Bertram with a stare of inquietude, and lifting her's from the infant on her knee, she met the looks of her husband ; the colour flushed over her face ; Sir Robert bit his lips, and with an angry frown rose, and without speaking, left the apartment. The suspicious

pitions I had long been endeavouring to instil were now raised, and I knew all these trifling circumstances would be remembered, and have weight with Sir Robert.—Lady Bertram appeared uneasy ; I laughed and soothed by turns ; leaving the room, and again returning, I assured her it was a violent pain in his head that caused the alteration she had seen in my brother's countenance, but that he was gone out quite well. Conscious of her own purity of heart, Alicia suspected not the jealousy of her husband, who from this time never caressed the infant as before. I took care to find means to keep alive the unjust suspicion I had laboured to instil. Sir Robert appeared at times as if he could not deem it possible his beloved Alicia had ever given cause to suppose any change in her sentiments towards him had taken place, and he was, as before, fondly attentive to her ; at others he would appear gloomy, reserved, and for whole days together used to absent himself. I saw he was.

was miserable, yet I knew unless he was so, my malice would remain ungratified.

“ Alicia appeared at such periods deeply dejected ; I acted the part of comforter, yet she complained not. I have seen the imperfect accents hang on the lips of my brother, but I have seen him check again the question he would have asked me, as if he thought it impiety to suppose Alicia was not virtuous, and as if he scorned the base suggestion he was about to make. Thus passed over the months of autumn, and when winter again came with its frosts and snows, still was Lord Masham at Thorpe. I found, that notwithstanding I believed his heart was yet Lady Bertram’s, that the daughter of the rector of St. Mary’s had charms sufficient to attract his attention ; he had sought many opportunities of urging his suit to Miss Shaw, who had prudence sufficient to prevent her listening to him, when unsanctioned by her parents. I however contrived, by letters wrote in her name, to inform his

Lordship

Lordship it was but fear of her father, who had (as I knew was the case) affianced her to another, which prevented her from listening to him on the subject of his love. In this letter I named a certain tree between Oak-dale and St. Mary's where Lord Masham's letters were to be deposited; he failed not to make use of this privilege, and a correspondence was thus established. Miss Shaw's name was Alicia, and no other was by his Lordship to be used, for fear of discovery. I now consented, in the lady's name, to an assignation with his Lordship; then informed him, that so closely did her father and her sister watch her, it was not in her power.— In answer to this Lord Masham said he was determined she<sup>l</sup> should not long remain under the roof of her tyrant, and her sister, he believed, was envious of her charms; that if she was not resolved to drive him to despair, he begged she would suffer him to visit her in disguise the following night, when they could concert matters for her elopement. I answered this letter by praying,

ing, if he valued the peace of his Alicia, not to attempt coming to the parsonage; that her father suspected her attachment, and had confined her to her room, where he intended she should stay during his Lordship's residence at Thorpe; therefore conjured him to quit it instantly, but to return privately to North Oak, and she would then immediately fix with him the manner of her elopement, which would then be easy, as she would regain her liberty. Lord Masham followed this counsel, and I, who had taken care to let my brother see his last letter to Miss Shaw, also personated him, by passing quickly out of Lady Bertram's chamber in men's clothes, as Sir Robert entered. Her ladyship having gone early to bed, was already asleep; I was pursued by my brother, who had just been reading Lord Masham's letter; but I, by a back way, retreated to my own chamber, where slipping on a long wrapper, which concealing my dress, I appeared to him as he passed the door of my apartment, all rage and fury.

fury. I heard from him an unconnected tale—I assisted in his search—I censured his base suspicions—I defended Lady Bertram, nor would I suffer him to see her. ‘Alas!’ said I, ‘it cannot be—it is not possible; this is the work of some wretch who envies your happiness: see not Lady Bertram till you are in possession of better intelligence.’

“The house, though every part was searched, was not found to contain Lord Masham. My brother mounted one of his fleetest hunters, and galloped to Thorpe Castle: his Lordship had set out at almost midnight—his servants knew not what road he had taken. The hour, every thing convinced my brother, who again returned to Oakdale, again wished to behold his once beloved Alicia; but I wept, entreated, and prevailed. To her I spoke of Sir Robert’s jealousy, of his rage, of his swearing to sacrifice her to his resentment. Conscious of her innocence, she would brave it. ‘Stay, my dear sister,’ I said, ‘till the first ebullition

tion of his wrath subsides ; then he will hear me plead for you.'—She, all gentleness, and void of any suspicion, sent a message by me to her husband : again I returned, and told her Sir Robert was now bent upon never more beholding her ; that he meant that night to send her to Bertram Castle, and imprison her for life. She would submit, if such was his pleasure, but no force should prevent her from seeing him ere she went. I endeavoured to persuade her this would but further irritate him, and at present she shrank from the trial.

" The rage of Sir Robert over, he gave himself up to deep despair ; all his hopes of happiness were for ever blasted ; he would quit England—he would end his days in some foreign land. To him I represented his lady as braving his resentment.

" I fixed with Lord Masham the next night for eloping with Miss Shaw ;—the end of the terrace wall at Oakdale was the appointed

appointed place of meeting. I had the whole day been busied in preventing my brother and Lady Bertram from seeing each other, and had succeeded in making her suppose I had ineffectually endeavoured to meliorate his wrath, but that he continued obstinately fixed in sending her to Bertram Castle, which she knew was little more than a heap of ruins, and I painted it in yet more dreadful colours ; it had long been uninhabited ; and I talked of robbers issuing from it, and laying the neighbourhood under contributions ; of travellers long lost to their friends, who had been found there sad spectacles of brutal rage, and humiliating proofs of morality. Alicia shuddered at the horrid picture ; she could meet death from the hands of Sir Robert ; but this horrid prison, she would do any thing to avoid. Thus she fell into the snare I so artfully had wound about her, and consented to quit Oakdale in disguise, whilst I was to provide all things ready for her flight. A chaise, with an old servant of her

father's, I told her, should wait at a certain hour at the end of the terrace wall, and in London she was to wait the subsiding of the storm with her mother's brother.— Again she wavered ; at Bertram Castle, however terrible it might be, would she await the pleasure of Sir Robert. Again I hinted at its horrors—again I wept, I entreated ; and she submitted to wear the dress I had provided, which was a similar one to what Miss Shaw generally wore. The hour approached—I bade her adieu, saying, a short time I hoped would again restore her to Oakdale ; meantime on me she might safely depend, and I would not fail of regularly writing to her. Lady Bertram now gave me a letter to her husband, as she had several before ; those letters I said I as yet dared not offer to deliver ; but for this, sure some favourable moment, which I should watch, would occur.

“ With a heart rent with that grief, which I affected, Alicia bade me tenderly farewell ;

calling me her beloved sister, her only friend. Alas ! I dare not comment on what I now feel, as I recal how she looked ;—what an agonized expression sat on her countenance as she entreated me to allow her again to behold her infant ! I feared her resolution, and refused. As she passed the room where Sir Robert was, she stopped ; he was traversing the floor—she heard his step—she heard his sigh ;—her hand rested on the lock—so nearly were my schemes defeated ; but I dragged her away, and passing through the saloon, reached the court. Again she lingered—again I urged her to fly ;—she crossed the terrace—I opened the door which led to the road ; then bolted it, lest she should return, and hastened back to my brother, of whom I hastily enquired for Lady Bertram. He looked at me with an air of wildness, ‘Why that question to me, Mildred ?’—‘ Oh ! too sure it is she is gone ! haste ! fly ! overtake her !—yes, too sure it was she who just now passed through the court. Oh ! that fatal letter she received this morning ! Lord

Masham—it is him, my brother, Alicia flies to meet.'—Sir Robert snatched his pistols, and with a frantic air, ran out of the house. I alarmed the servants, and followed. We had not far to go, just beyond the limes that front the gate;—by the dim shade of moon-light was seen a chaise standing, and, ere we could reach it, was heard the report of a pistol; the lights the servants carried revealed the whole scene;—on the ground laid Lord Masham wounded by the hand of Sir Robert, who, in all the agony of despair, was throwing the other pistol from him as he fell by the body.—Lady Bertram had sunk in strong convulsions at the bottom of the chaise. For a moment I felt remorse at the distress I had brought on my brother; but I had now alike triumphed over Lord Masham, and her who dared rival me in his heart; I was revenged for the contempt which his Lordship had entertained for me.

“ Lord

“ Lord Masham was conveyed into Oakdale Hall ; so was Lady Bertram, in a state insensible of her misery. Sir Robert opposed me not, but silently allowed me to conduct him into the house ; his rage was evaporated, and he was sunk in dejection. ‘ Fly, (I said) my dear brother, instantly fly ! the wounds of Lord Masham, if not at once fatal, yet leave little room for hope ; cross over to France ; wait there the issue.’— ‘ Alas, Mildred, I have nought worth living for ! why wish me to prolong a life that is and must ever be a burthen to myself !’— He seated himself, and seemed as if in a fixed stupor, whilst I, with my usual celebrity, gave orders regarding Lord Masham and Lady Bertram, and for the journey I was about to undertake. In a short space of time a carriage was ready, and assuming a kind of air, which seemed to forbid resistance, I took Sir Robert’s arm, and led him to it. He spoke not as he seated himself by me ; when we gained the top of the hill, and by the light of the sinking moon were seen the peaked

turrets of the hall, he put out his head, and continued to gaze on them, till no longer they were distinguishable. ‘ Oh ! false, perjured Alicia ! accursed dissembler !’ he exclaimed ; again he drew back, nor once spoke till we reached Darlington, where my brother Henry was on the recruiting service. To him I explained such a part of the story as suited me, and entreated he would accompany Sir Robert to the Continent till the result was known regarding Lord Masham’s wounds ; to this my brother readily consented, as he knew he could easily procure leave of absence from his Colonel. ‘ Oh, Mildred ! (said Sir Robert, at parting with me) to your prudent care do I commit the lost Alicia—she who was once so dear, so infinitely dear to me ! Inspired by your example, she may yet regain the paths of virtue ! do not then you forsake her, guilty though she is ! The child too, who bears my name, who must inherit my estate—Alicia’s child ! be you, Mildred, a parent to it !’ My brothers went south ; I returned

to

to Oakdale, where I found Lady Bertram delirious with fever, and the life of Lord Masham despaired of. I became the nurse of Alicia ; so touching, so simple, so heart-rending were her complaints, that at times, had I been possessed of worlds, I would have given them that I had never injured her ; but as these transitory fits of repentance subsided, I found I had embarked in an enterprize from which, unless I confessed myself one of the most depraved beings in the creation, there was no retreating ; and though I was revenged, I found I was miserable, yes, most miserable ; for I found Lady Bertram's virtues, her gentle and amiable manner, conciliated the love, the esteem of whoever approached her, and I saw the very domestics appear to detest me ; —true, they obeyed me, but it was fear ; I dreaded too they might have developed my secrets. I was jealous,—suspicious of all, every thing. On Lord Masham I had wreaked my malice ; yet that had not conveyed happiness to me—far otherwise ; I

loved him, I had always loved him ; his life now in danger, I could have watched over him, I could have performed the most menial offices for him, I should have felt comforted by it ; but I was obliged to appear, though acting with humanity, as if remembering he would have carried off Lady Bertram, and that his wounds were justly inflicted. With a soul harrowed up by reflection, a prey to feelings that agonized me, I had a part to sustain most arduous ; yet I shrank not, and made exertions, which had they proceeded from motives that were praise-worthy, would have been highly meritorious. Alicia was brought back from the very brink of the grave, and this she attributed to my care ; sadly did she deplore the fatal mistake which had caused so much sorrow to all parties, nor could she develope what had occasioned it ; a chaise waiting at the appointed place, the step down, she had not hesitated, but instantly got in ; nor had she discovered her mistake till Sir Robert made the postillion stop, and then she beheld

Lord

Lord Masham. Miss Shaw was married the morning after this rencontre to the young clergyman to whom she had long been engaged, and set out from the church of St. Mary's to go South with him ; I knew of the day being fixed ere I arranged my plans, and judged it a fortunate circumstance to avoid discovery. As soon as Lord Masham was sensible of his being at Oakdale, he insisted on being conveyed to Thorpe, which, at the hazard of his life was done. I had letters from Sir Robert, which, before I ventured to shew them to his Lady, underwent many alterations.

“ It was some months before Lord Masham was out of danger, but ere then he wrote to the patient victim of my malice a true and particular account of what had caused the fatal mistake, by informing her of the affair with Miss Shaw, merely concealing names, in terms most highly expressive of the exalted sense he entertained of Lady Bertram’s merit. He apologized for

the misery he had caused her, and that it was not seeming appearances which that fatal night were against her, that could shake his belief of her not being one of the most perfect characters he knew ; that he did not doubt it was in his power to clear up the mystery to Sir Robert ; that he had wrote to him the same account he had to her Ladyship, and hoped a short time would restore her to the heart of her husband.

“ Alicia wrote to my brother ; I intercepted the letter, though I had it not in my power to do so with Lord Masham’s, which, however, produced no effect, as Sir Robert deemed it but an invention. To avoid reflections most painful, my brother sought the society of the gay and the dissipated.

“ Lady Bertram, now despairing of a reconciliation, would have quitted Oakdale ; but she was not to take the child, and she could not bear to leave him. She soon began, after the fever had left her, to have  
all

all the usual symptoms attendant on a consumption. As I beheld the meek sufferer gradually sinking into the grave, I was seized with a poignant sense of remorse, and I suffered a thousand times more than her, whose last days were cheered by conscious innocence. Oh ! can I bear to recal the hours, can I write the agony I sustained, when Alicia, putting her child into my arms, ‘ take, (said she) my dear Mildred, this helpless infant into your protection ! His father may desert—may disown him—but you, my sister, will prove to this child the same kind protector, the same prudent counsellor you have been to his unfortunate mother !’ Ah ! that then I had confessed my treachery ; ah ! that then I had implored her forgiveness, and hid myself in some distant country ! But the measure of my iniquity was not full—I had but then began my career of wickedness ! I trembled as I took the child, who clung, as if he divined my future malice, to his mother. I wept—I kneeled at the feet of Lady Bertram—I

let fall expressions which amazed her, and had not at that instant the physician been announced, I had, by a candid declaration of my guilt, avoided perhaps the added load under which I now sink. But on what trifles do the greatest events of our lives hinge ; my ideas took another turn, and I thought only of the best way to conceal my depravity. Alicia did not survive a month from this period ; peaceful was her departure, who sure was an angel upon earth ; her soul was the seat of truth—of virtue ; every feminine grace was her's. No sooner was the interment of Lady Bertram over, than I set out for London upon a visit, leaving the nurse in charge of the child.

“ Lord Masham was ordered to Lisbon by the physicians, and about this period left England ; to his death may I also be deemed necessary, for before I left London, where I spent two months, I learned the ship was lost in which he embarked, ere it reached its port. Severely did I mourn ; for still,

notwithstanding the cool contempt I had experienced from him, I loved Lord Masham ; yet sure it was no gentle inspiration ; it was the dart of love, steeped in the pit of Acheron, that filled my heart with hell-born passions, for from this source do I date my first glaring deviation from rectitude.— Stop then, reader, if such you have committed, stop at the first crime, nor let shame stimulate to concealment ; if thou attempt it, thou art entangled for ever ; the net of thy iniquities shall envelope thee !

“ At Naples the news of Lady Bertram’s death reached her husband, who instantly embarked for England, and ere I had any intimation of his return, he arrived at Oakdale. Deeply, severely did he condemn himself ; it was not possible his beloved Alicia had been guilty ; why did he believe it ? he was her murderer—she was killed by his unkind suspicions—his friend too, the generous Masham, owed his death to him ! I did not attempt to stop these violent effusions

effusions of grief ; I knew my brother would not listen to me, did I attempt to deprecate the angel he mourned ; nor did I suppose he would hear my consolations. At first he could not bear to behold his child, but on the second day, hung over him with fondness ; the lovely boy had the mild and interesting countenance of his mother, and Sir Robert seemed but to live as he beheld him. In the favourite walks of Alicia would my brother wander with his little son for days, and he took interest in nothing but what nursed his sorrow, by reminding him of his loss.

“ The gay life Sir Robert had led whilst on the Continent, added to the former embarrassed state of his finances, made his affairs desperate, and he was obliged to rouse himself, to retard the ruin which hung impending ;—money was borrowed to satisfy the most importunate of the creditors. I perceived the mischief must shortly overwhelm my brother, of course me, whose entire

entire dependance was upon his generosity. During his absence from home, I had the small-pox in so dreadful a manner, that those attractions, which my vanity made me suppose almost unrivalled, were gone. Destitute too of fortune, I had small chance of being provided for by matrimony; therefore, with my brother must I sink: his handsome face, and fine person, with the polished address he had now acquired, added to his rank in life, made me entertain no doubt of his obtaining the hand of some wealthy heiress, could I induce him to address such a one.

“ I had, during my visit in London, become acquainted with a Miss Harris, the only child of a rich merchant, who died after Sir Robert’s return from Italy, leaving his daughter an immense fortune, but subject, I was informed, to certain whimsical restrictions; one of which was, that if she married a Peer, or the son of one, her fortune was to build and endow an hospital for idiots;

idiots; in the front of which was to be placed her statue, holding the coronet she was or would be entitled to wear, with an inscription below, signifying the sum it had cost her. This I knew was a mortifying clause to Miss Harris, whom I had heard repeatedly declare she would never marry unless she could be styled Lady. My brother could confer the wished-for title, and was not within the objectionable clause of the will; yet I dared not attempt mentioning to Sir Robert that by this marriage, if he chose, his affairs might be redeemed, and the family be more opulent than for the three last generations it had been. To wean Sir Robert from his grief, I pretended the child was sick, and required change of air; I thus removed my brother from Oakdale to the seats of different friends.

“ Sir Robert’s melancholy gave way; I then declared the child was in perfect health, and proposed returning to Oakdale. It was the depth of winter. Sir Robert revolted from

from the idea ; he could not bear to return to a place which recalled such gloomy thoughts.—‘ You are right, Sir Robert ; I am certain,’ said I, ‘ you would live at less expence any where than at the hall, where, however limited your means, you must keep up the ancient hospitality of the family.’—I then proposed London for our residence the remainder of the winter ; and my brother, whose easiness of temper seldom allowed him to look beyond the present, and who hated to oppose, acquiesced.—Arrived in the metropolis, I soon found means to introduce Sir Robert to Miss Harris, whilst, by degrees, I estranged the child from its parent ; till he, who at Oakdale was scarce an hour separated from him, would be days without beholding him. I had taught the boy to be terrified at his father, by frequent and unmerited punishments in his name, whilst to my brother I spoke of the evil propensities of his son. Miss Harris and Sir Robert had from me been mutually assured of each other’s passion, till what was

but

but imaginary, became real. But why need I relate the arts I practised? suffice it to say, Sir Robert declared he loved Miss Harris, who rejected not his suit, and preparations were soon begun for their union; when, in preparing the settlements, Mr. Harris's will being examined, it was found that he, who had suffered under the tyranny of a step-mother, had forbade his daughter ever to become one, under the penalty of losing one half of her fortune, which was to go to Christ Church Hospital, where he had been educated. Miss Harris declared this was a very reasonable restriction; she had no idea of making Sir Robert's son her heir, as she, if twenty children should come from this marriage, could not expect one to have a title, as that, with Sir Robert's entailed estate, must go to his eldest son; she therefore resolved to break off the match. My brother sued in vain, and I would gladly have compounded with the hospital for half Miss

Harris's

Harris's fortune. I, however, at length, by representing the infinite distress of Sir Robert, got the wealthy heiress to promise she would not marry for a year. The child, I said, was a sickly, puny boy, who I did not think could survive many months.

We returned to Oakdale, where we were surrounded by importunate creditors, and, but for the little Robert, affluence courted the acceptance of my brother. Scarce any thing remained to be disposed of; already were the horses sold, and an execution was expected to be put in force at Oakdale. I now ventured to propose sending the child to some distant country, and then proclaiming his death. Sir Robert would not listen to me on the subject that day, but the next his person was arrested. I gave up on this occasion the family jewels.—‘To save you, my generous Mildred, from poverty, from want, I would do much; yet I cannot consent that my child should be abandoned, that he should quit Oakdale.’—I promised

he

lie never should—that he should never be from under my care, yet be believed dead, if Sir Robert, trusting to my prudence, would suffer me to manage the affair as I chose. ‘Alas!’ said I, ‘unless you marry Miss Harris, the child, as well as myself, may be abandoned to want.’—I then slightly hinted at Lord Masham’s conduct regarding Lady Bertram, and said, I wondered why his Lordship had never produced the letter he spoke of having received from the young woman regarding the assignation at the terrace wall. This I perfectly comprehended, having taken care to secure his pocket-book the evening of his being wounded, in which was contained my letters. Sir Robert paused.—‘True, (at last he said) that was strange, very strange indeed, Mildred.’ Yet you do not suspect the truth of what I wished to believe; but now I beseech you, frankly say, what are your real sentiments; you defended Lady Bertram, you corroborated the tale told by Lord Masham.’

I was

I was silent;—again he entreated—I eluded the question, and at length left the room;—Sir Robert followed.—‘ A child (said I) whose blood is tainted, ought not to inherit the lands and titles of the Baronets of Oakdale; ask me not, my brother, further questions; have I not to you defended Lady Bertram, have I not ever been studious of your happiness.’ Sir Robert wrung my hand, sighed, and retired to his chamber, and the next day a mutual promise passed between us, on his side not to interfere with my plans, on mine not to send the child from Oakdale, or entrust him to the care of any one but myself. Sir Robert then set out, agreeable to my directions, for Northumberland.

“ The hall of Oakdale, which was originally a Castle of considerable strength, gave, under the reigns of the Plantagenets, the title of Baron to its owners—a privilege which was lost, however, when Randolph Bertram, the tenth Baron of Oakdale, was attainted by

Edward

Edward the Fourth, for having sided with the house of Lancaster. The castle had been demolished during those desolating wars, and their estates laid waste; by the first prince of the house of Tudor, a part of their lands was restored, and Henry the Eighth, by the gift of some monastic lands, in some degree atoned for the losses the family had sustained. At this period, from the ruins of Oakdale Castle rose the hall, which in the time of Queen Elizabeth was greatly enlarged and beautified by Sir Philip Bertram, who was knighted for his valour by her Majesty, and rose to considerable distinction in her service. In this reign the Roman Catholic religion, which under the preceding one had been the persecutors, now in its turn became the persecuted. Attached to his religion, Sir Philip found out a way to practise it in secret, though he publicly abjured what would have prevented his advancement at court. The castle of Oakdale, in common with most other buildings of its age and style, had many private and concealed

concealed passages, which yet remained; and when Sir Philip added the wings to the house, he contrived a secret way that led through the closet of the room in which he slept, into a small chapel, where in private he exercised the duties of his religion, and where he kept a priest to perform its sacred functions. From the chapel there was a communication with the vaults, that originally had been used as the burying place of the family, (though the greatest part of them had been interred at Bertram), for where this wing of the hall was built had stood the chapel of Oakdale Castle. From these concealed apartments a way, by the subterraneous passages of which I have spoken, led out into the garden, as also to the banks of the river. This secret, from the time of Sir Philip, had been carefully guarded in the family, as a certain place of refuge; such indeed it proved during the civil wars in the reign of Charles the First, for in it was saved from depredation the plate, linen, and most valuable furniture; here also lived for

a con-

a considerable time, a son of the family of Oakdale, concealed from a strict search made after him, in consequence of his engaging in the rebellion of 1715. It had been the custom for never more than two of the Bertrams to be in possession of this secret. At the death of a brother of my father's, his eldest son was too young, he thought, to be made acquainted with an affair that was deemed of much importance, and to me it was entrusted; my father died suddenly, or would doubtless, as had been usual in the like cases, have disclosed it to his heir; with me alone it rested, and I resolved so it should for the present remain. Into these apartments therefore, when Sir Robert quitted the hall, I conveyed what I judged would be requisite for my plan, and I administered to my nephew drugs that produced fever and sickness;—a physician was sent for, who attended a few days, when I gave him a sleepy potion, which imposed on the ignorant female servants about him so far that they did not dispute his death. I suffered

after

after this no one to be in the chamber with the sleeping innocent, whom I conveyed into the concealed apartments once dedicated to piety, but from thence to deeds of darkness, and bitter—bitter repentance. I put into the coffin appointed to receive the body of the heir of Oakdale, a wax figure which I had made, an art I was expert in ; the face, which bore an exact resemblance to that of the devoted boy, was seen when in the coffin by all the servants and most of the females, whose husbands were tenants of Sir Robert's, in the vale.

“ The day after the interment my brother returned : scarce could I convince him the child was safe, even though for that purpose I brought him into Sir Philip's chamber, where his father beheld him, though I would not suffer him to speak.—In this room, which was seldom entered, and which I had kept locked up for some time, did Sir Robert suppose I meant to conceal his son ; his anguish was extreme when he

quitted Oakdale to renew his addresses to Miss Harris, under the idea of the death of his heir ;—but I will not recapitulate ; suffice it to say, in a few weeks from this period the marriage took place I had been at such pains to accomplish, but the fortune of the wealthy heiress was so settled, that her husband had the disposal of no part without her permission. Soon after the marriage Sir Robert and Lady Bertram came to Oakdale, which she declared her utter aversion to ; they shortly quitted it, and her ladyship was highly offended by my proposing to accompany her to Acornbank, which estate was the only landed property she brought into the family. In less than a year Lady Bertram was mother to a little girl, and then consented to the rebuilding Bertram Castle, and making such alterations and improvements on the estate as was necessary. Meanwhile I was a prisoner at Oakdale, and my innocent charge, who except at night was deprived of air and exercise, continued to grow, and remain healthy.

Lady

Lady Bertram almost every year had a child; yet all, except the eldest girl, died in infancy, and when she had been nine years married, it was thought she would have no more. Sir Robert had at different times endeavoured, by sounding his lady upon similar subjects, to pave the way for introducing his son to her; but she had uniformly declared, that was he to attempt imposing upon her in any way, she would instantly withdraw herself and fortune; nor was this an idle threat, for she had it in her power exceedingly to distress Sir Robert, as by her settlement, and the way in which the money had been advanced for the improvement of the estate, she could recover the whole for her own separate use. Alas! my dear nephew, truth obliges me to say, what from a child had better be concealed, Lady Bertram ever chose to consider her interest separate from that of her husband, and no doubt could remain, that had he produced his son, she would instantly have determined upon revenge, which would have rendered the

situation of Sir Robert infinitely worse than when she married him ;—by this means, and by the regard my brother had for her, Lady Bertram, availing herself of his natural easiness of temper (that even preferred imposition to contention), ruled implicitly. Spite of the attachment he felt to her, Sir Robert knew little happiness ; the angel he had lost was sadly contrasted by the selfish-minded Lady Bertram, who doated on the child she allowed to govern her, as absolutely as her Ladyship did her husband. The want of a son to inherit the title and estates was to Lady Bertram a constant source of inquietude, whilst Sir Robert considered it, as it perhaps really was, a well-deserved punishment for disowning his child. He visited Oakdale with this idea in his mind, and insisted upon seeing his son, who was now grown almost as tall as himself. I was obliged to submit to my brother's wishes ; he saw his son, but saw him uninstructed, ignorant of every species of education, and equally so of the most common occurrences of

of life ; even the modes and forms of speech were nearly unknown to him. Ashamed of my neglect, I assured my brother no pains or care had been wanting, and that the youth was destitute of understanding. Sir Robert had meditated taking him from the hall, and presenting him as his son to Lady Bertram, who now began to despair of having one of her own, as three years had elapsed since she had a child. My brother therefore proposed sending his heir to a distant country, where, under the care of some person, he would learn to distinguish objects that surrounded him, and receive the rudiments of education. I warmly opposed this plan ; and by promising to renew my endeavours for instruction, I prevailed upon my brother to leave his son with me at Oakdale, repeatedly assuring him, I would do all in my power to render him fit for being introduced to Lady Bertram, if in two years time she had not a son.

“ I had long been weary of the confinement to which I had subjected myself, and had taken a young person of the name of Eliza Bouchier, whose mother was my first cousin, and daughter to the only brother of my father, who like him, improvident, had dissipated his fortune, and left his child unprovided for ; she had married a gay young man, both died, and Eliza was left destitute. By taking her to reside with me I got credit for charity I possessed not, my principal motive being to secure myself a companion in my solitude. Over this young creature I often poured out the fits of passion to which I became subject, for I found no satisfaction save the malignant one of making all round me as miserable as myself. The world contained neither happiness nor pleasure for me, and a sure way to draw down my displeasure, was the appearance of enjoying either ; my temper, joined with the idea of the unquiet spirits which were believed to haunt Sir Philip’s chamber, obliged me to hire domestics from distant parts

parts of the country, as no person in the neighbourhood chose their sons or daughters to live at Oakdale Hall, where often I should have been left perfectly alone, but for Eliza, who could not leave me. Since the days of Sir Philip, the idea of his chamber being the resort of some unhallowed guests prevailed at St. Mary's—a superstition never discountenanced by that part of the family possessed of the secret of his chapel, they deeming this belief a means of further guarding it; for this end was the apartment generally locked up, and a curious piece of mechanism occasionally employed as the agent of terror. A spring inserted in the floor, by being pressed down, drew back a part of the wainscot, from which advanced an armed figure; but this had, by time or accident, been so far spoiled, as not to open with this spring. But soon after Sir Robert's second marriage a travelling German came to Oakdale, and I found by the skill he displayed in repairing a very curious clock, that he would be able also to restore what was wanting to the move-

ments of this figure. I bound him to secrecy by a sum of money, and paid him liberally for what he did, which was to make a piece of clock-work which, communicating in the same way as the former one with the figure, also disclosed it, but disclosed it momentarily, nor could the pannel which it removed be opened, as strong bolts instantly fastened it ; this was also moved with a spring inserted curiously in the midst of the floor, which being pressed, instantly set the machine moving, with a noise which resembled deep groans ; I also had it in my power to prevent the spring being affected by the strongest pressure. No sooner did I judge the contriver of this was at a distance, than I, who had substituted a waxen figure of a most horrid aspect for the figure in armour, tried its effect upon some of the servants, whom at night I would call into the room, or send for something, which I had taken care to place so, that they could not avoid touching the spring ; thus instantly was the terrible tale spread, which I affected not to believe.

believe. From this period no servant in the vale ever would venture into the hall, yet still upon the unfortunate beings who were strangers did I try the effect of my scheme, which cost the lives, I greatly fear, of several whom I terrified into fits. Eliza I had never suffered to behold the spectre, and she uniformly ridiculed the idea.

“ Soon after Sir Robert’s last-mentioned visit to Oakdale, a brother of my mother’s died, who had bequeathed to me ten thousand pounds. The hall appeared to me a prison, which in fact it had long been; I resolved to regain my liberty, and determined in part to entrust Eliza. I set forth the vast obligations she was under to me, and then reminded her of the large fortune which now was at my own disposal; this I told her should at my decease be solely her’s, and that during my lifetime she should share it, provided she conducted herself as I wished. As an earnest of my intentions, I made her a present of money, and an entire

new stock of fashionable apparel. Eliza promised as amply as I had done my will should be her's. I then said I had a secret in my possession, known only to myself, which I wished her to share with me, but that I required a solemn oath she should not divulge or use it to my prejudice. Eliza, without hesitating, took the oath I prescribed ; and I informed her of the concealed apartments, where a youth of the family of Bertram (who in point of understanding was almost an idiot) was confined ; as it was feared some artful person might, in his name, contest an estate now in the possession of Sir Robert, that all I required of her was, at stated periods to attend this person. I then led the way into Sir Philip's chambers, and shewed her into the concealed one, where we found my unfortunate nephew amusing himself, as he often did, with chalk-ing on the floor the resemblance of those objects he had seen ; he was now employed in tracing out his father, and without lifting his eyes, desired I would not walk upon that,

for it was the man he had seen who talked of Alicia, and cried. Eliza stepped upon one of his lines ; he struck at her, and raised his eyes from his employment ; he appeared as if petrified by wonder ; his eyes were fixed—his mouth open—whilst one hand rested on the floor, the other remained as he had raised it to repeat his blow. ‘Rise,’ said I, with my usual tone of command.—‘Tell me then what is this ; it is not like you ; will you leave it when you go away ? and I will never follow you again, and ask to go where I used when I was only that high.’

“ The heir of Sir Robert was at this time tall, and finely formed ; his features were uncommonly handsome, but his complexion was pale and fallow, from the want of air and exercise he had experienced ; since I found, when I took him into the garden, at a time when all besides were asleep, he became too strong for me to bring back to his prison against his inclination. I had also till then suffered him to play for hours in the court,

when I had sent the servants out, or by locking the doors, prevented them reaching that front of the hall. Was I to say a youth, destitute of all kinds of knowledge, had an intelligent countenance, I should not, perhaps, express myself with propriety ; but it certainly was an interesting one, and far from conveying an idea of its possessor wanting understanding. ‘ What is it lady ? ’ pointing to Eliza, was the question my nephew again, with an impatient tone, enquired.—‘ I told him it was a woman I had brought to talk to him, and give him victuals, and clothes, and chalk.’—‘ And will she stay here and make them, or will she let me go into that place where the apples live, and the birds, and where I used to run away from you, lady ? ’ ‘ No (I replied), but if you are obedient, she will come again often to see you.’—‘ Will you then, woman, come back again ? ’ Eliza assured him she would. This visit over, she began her attendance, and in a short time, supposing I might trust her with my charge, I set out for a fashionable place of resort,

refort, in a new carriage with suitable attendants.

“ Till now I had admitted no one to share my secrets ; I was at once the contriver and executor of my own plans ; yet having now a handsome fortune at my disposal, I could no longer brook the solitary life I led at Oakdale, and buoyed up by that self-consequence from which my faults first originated, I ardently desired to mix again in the world ; where I doubted not of meeting admirers, and trusted to the oath I had exacted from a young woman who depended on my bounty, for keeping secret what had cost me so much trouble and anxiety to do. Eliza was twenty-four, had an understanding uncommonly quick and discerning ; my treatment had taught her cunning and deceit ; she had heard me talk of duties which she saw I did not fulfil, although I expected she should ; and, like me, Eliza placed her chief good in the gratification of her passions, which she also from me learned

to conceal ;—thus was she rendered, by my example, well able to contend with me, who now had put it in her power to exercise those dormant powers of a mind uncommonly capacious.

“ I had told Eliza a tale, which though not truth, yet in some degree varied not far from it. I had said he was heir to an estate, but excluded because of the imbecility of his mind. I had also told her he had not a friend but myself, and from the period when I first betrayed myself to her, Eliza, no less artful than I was, laid her plans, and thought of her oath only as it served as a cover to her schemes. To marry the youth, and claim his estate, was the foundation of her hopes of independency and greatness ; but by instruction she knew it would first be needful to remove the charge of idiotism which I had laid against him. No sooner had I quitted Oakdale, than she allowed him free access into Sir Philip’s chamber, where she spent the larger portion of her days

days in instructing him ; and so successful was she, that in a month's time he was able to read a little, and she soon had made him understand I was his gaoler ; but if he would learn those things she meant to teach him, she would take him away from his prison, and never leave him, but that he must carefully conceal his knowledge from the Lady, which was the name I chose he should distinguish me by. Treated with kindness, the unfortunate youth was perfectly obedient to his instructress, who was well qualified for the task she had undertaken. Her own education had been finished, or nearly so, at the death of her parents, and she had been taught all that was needful at present for her charge, such as writing, arithmetic, and drawing, (for which he had a natural genius) nor in the hearts of men more conversant in the world would the charms of Eliza have wanted force. She had an air of superiority which arose from the full regularity of her features, and the expression of her fine eyes and intelligent countenance,

nor

nor were her manners destitute of an elegance and ease which were inherent in her, and were not acquired by mixing in company, as since her residence at Oakdale she had seen few people but its inhabitants.

“ I returned, after a few months absence, to the hall, and so satisfied was I of Eliza’s care, and so implicitly did I confide in her, that I scrupled not to quit Oakdale frequently for weeks together, when Eliza contrived her charge should have both air and exercise, and he no longer was destitute of knowledge, though yet that was limited to books and Eliza’s conversation, whom he informed he had a faint recollection of several places in the garden, which he had seen when he was a very little child ; he also mentioned I was not then cross to him, and that I then called him Robert, and he me aunt ; also that he had a father. Eliza was lost in conjecture, yet resolved to penetrate the mystery which hung over this unfortunate youth. She scrupled not to enter the place

place where I kept my papers, and there she found letters from Sir Robert, which convinced her the unhappy prisoner, to whom he often alluded, was his son and heir. Eliza had heard from me of the death of the child, whose existence had for some time prevented Miss Harris becoming Lady Bertram. Miss Bouchier then bribed the sexton of St. Mary's, and descending into the vault, opened the coffin which was supposed to contain the body of the child ; there she found sufficient to convince her that the child then believed to have been interred, was the youth who from that period I had immured in those gloomy chambers ; yet as no person disputed the death of Sir Robert's heir, and as the secret remained only with me, she saw there was small chance of asserting his rights, unless Sir Robert would relent, and acknowledge him.

“ At this period you, Sir Robert, were born, and I was summoned to Acornbank to stand sponsor. My brother already knew  
that

that Eliza was entrusted with the secret of the prisoner at Oakdale, which I had been obliged to confess after my first absence from it. No sooner had I set out on my journey, than Eliza informed the servants she was going to make a visit to some friends, and ordered a chaise to be ready at an hour in the morning when it was not light. The son of Sir Robert and Alicia was set at liberty, and waited, by Eliza's appointment, a mile from Oakdale; they reached London, and were married at the Fleet the very day of your being christened, Sir Robert, and the next day, at Acornbank, intended to beg pardon, and restitution of his father's kindness. But I had heard of Eliza quitting Oakdale, and fearing something wrong, hastened thither with my brother, where his son and Eliza followed. Sir Robert, moved by the melting language of nature, acknowledged his son, and as he clasped the handsome youth to his heart, vowed to make him amends for what had passed, but that the discovery must not be made

made public as yet ; a few years, nay months, might make a material change, as Lady Bertram's health seemed at present in a declining state, and he could not bear the idea of confessing to her the deception which had been practised ; in the meanwhile, and till he did publicly acknowledge him as his son, he would allow him a genteel sufficiency provided neither Mr. or Mrs. Bertram made any attempts to disclose the story. To this proposal the amiable and unfortunate youth instantly agreed, and Eliza, whose heart panted after rank and affluence, reluctantly consented to the plan, which she saw no way to avoid. A house was taken for them in a wild and retired part of Westmoreland, where they resided under a feigned name.

“ Two years elapsed, Lady Bertram still lived, and Eliza no longer could bear the humble style in which she moved, no longer could she brook the haughty manner in which I treated her. By various pretences I prevented Sir Robert from beholding his son,

son, as I trembled at the idea of being exposed to the world in my true colours, and above all I dreaded Sir Robert's coming to the knowledge of my treachery regarding his beloved Alicia, and his friend Lord Masham. Yet I kept up appearances with my nephew, who with his spouse visited me at Oakdale, where she found means again to investigate my papers, and learned, during her stay, I was about to marry a Mr. Leger, a plain country squire of coarse manners, but large fortune. I informed her of the day being fixed, when she, before she quitted the hall, spoke to me of the report. The day after Mr. and Mrs. Bertram returned to their own house, Sir Robert, his Lady, and daughter arrived in order to be present at my nuptials. On the appointed day I went, accompanied by them, to St. Mary's church, where Mr. Leger was to meet me; a large concourse of people was assembled, but I saw not, as I expected, the elegant coach Mr. Leger had bought on the occasion, and as I alighted, his footman

came

came up, pushing his way through the crowd, and said, 'his master had sent him to tell me I need not wait, for he had changed his mind.' The affront was a public and a most mortifying one, yet I sunk not under it; my soul took fire, and I burned for revenge on the author. The whisper ran buzzing through the crowd; the pity of Lady Bertram, the astonishment of her daughter, and the agitated look of Sir Robert, (who I saw dreaded as I did some discovery relative to his son) were all calculated to depress me, and subdue that cool command of temper and manner which I wished to preserve. Had I at that instant possessed the power, I would have annihilated all who beheld my disgrace, for I imagined I saw a malicious pleasure in the countenances of those who surrounded me, which seemed to remind me of my former arrogance, and that I was justly punished for having, without mercy, exercised the iron rod of my power over some beloved relative or friend. I again entered the carriage, and begged

begged Sir Robert would accompany me to Brushwood Hall, where I would instantly go, to have an explanation from Mr. Leger. I bade Lady and Miss Bertram good morning with a gay air, and then threw amongst the crowd the contents of my purse: 'Follow me, (I said) my friends, to Brushwood; the squire has provided a dinner, which was intended for me, and what company I chose, and you, who have heard of his ill usage, shall partake of it. I was saluted with three cheers, and then taking out the horses, we were thus drawn to the squire's house, before which we found him walking; but terrified at the shouts of "Long live Sir Robert and Madame Mildred," he retreated as I alighted, and I followed, to enquire of my expected husband, in a haughty tone, his reasons for acting as he had done. 'My reasons,' said he, 'are contained here,' giving a lefster into Sir Robert's hands. I now told him I was resolved not to quit his house till he permitted the mob who surrounded it to eat the dinner which was, I knew, provided for the

the wedding. Glad at any rate to be clear of me, and moreover, I believe, afraid force would be used, he determined to do it with a good grace, and agreed to my proposal. I notified to my followers what I had done, and the house was instantly filled with guests, I staying till I saw the tables covered with provisions, and a proportionable quantity of ale and punch. During this Sir Robert was with Mr. Leger in another room; when my brother returned, he appeared pale and agitated, and taking my hand, led me to the carriage, where the servants had replaced the horses.

“ During our drive to Oakdale, Sir Robert informed me the letter the squire had shewn him contained dark hints regarding my conduct for several years. Could I, Mildred, credit what is advanced, I should at this instant be the most wretched being upon earth; but these surmises are false; I will not, I dare not think of them! I cannot believe them, and retain my senses!—

But

But here is the letter; I prevailed upon Leger to give it me.'

" With a trembling hand I took it, and saw it was Mrs. Bertram's writing; the hints given in it regarding my duplicity to the late Lady Bertram were such, as to convince me the writer was in possession of some intelligence, which if fully disclosed, must ruin me for ever in the good opinion of my brother; but couched in the manner they were, nothing certain could be ascertained. From my dislike to Lady Bertram, was traced my ill treatment of her child, and referred Mr. Leger to Sir Robert for a confirmation of the truth of my hatred to his son, though he knew not my hatred to his Lady. The letter concluded with several instances of my arrogant and overbearing spirit, and with advice to Mr. Leger, if he valued his peace, not to take me as his wife, and assuring him if he even at the altar declined my hand, the rest of my transactions should be concealed; but that, if he persisted

persisted in marrying me, such a scene of iniquity should be disclosed, as should cover me with infamy, and of course he would be involved in it. Secrecy was enjoined, which the squire had not complied with.

“ I shewed Sir Robert, on our return home, letters from Mrs. Bertram, which proved the writing was her’s; and to falsify the account her rancour had given to Mr. Leger, I recalled various instances of the attachment which appeared mutual between Lady Bertram and myself. The sacrifice I had made of all I could command, my jewels to save Sir Robert from distress, and several instances of less importance were hinted at, which my brother had never ceased to remember. Disbelieving, therefore, what was advanced to my prejudice, he tore the letter to atoms, and again was he confident in my integrity, and denounced vengeance on Mrs. Bertram, who had, in her letter, said he was but a mere puppet in the hands of the artful Mildred. I failed not

to magnify the wicked dissimulation of Eliza, whom I had treated as if she had been my daughter, and how ungrateful her whole conduct had been; yet I intreated no rash step might be taken, but that Sir Robert would, with me, pass this affair over in silence, as, if she was irritated, I doubted not of her acquainting Lady Bertram of all she knew. My brother acquiesced in my opinion, and after a week's stay at Oakdale, he with his family quitted it, and I was left a prey to the most turbulent passions. A thousand times I execrated my folly in even trusting any one with a secret of such importance as I had confided to Eliza, whom I now found had by some means come at my very thoughts, and I was assured it could be by no other means than gaining access to the place where I kept my papers. I knew, did no other reasons restrain her, she wished for nothing so sincerely as revenge on me, and I felt myself in the power of a woman who hated me. To anticipate her revenge, I acted in idea deeds of dreadful

ful import ; I saw I had been her dupe ; I saw that she had assumed a frank simplicity of manner, far from her real character, that had thrown me off my guard. I had bequeathed my fortune to Eliza, and at her marriage declared it should remain so, therefore the hope of retaining this, I suppose, had joined in the wish of revenge which actuated Mrs. Bertram's letter to the squire of Brushwood. I had my will altered, making an illegitimate child of Lord Marnham's my heir, whose memory was yet dear to me.

“ My anger would have fallen heavy on Mr. Leger, had I deemed him worthy of any thing but contempt. He had informed Sir Robert he thought it was a pity he should have been at such a great expence for nothing, and thought he must marry somebody with a better character, though she had not, like me, thousands ; and in pursuance of this plan he chose for a wife, in less than a week after, a young woman of

fifteen, who was the daughter of one of his tenants. I resolved to triumph, and on the green of St. Mary's Oak had temporary booths erected, where for two days I feasted all that came in honour of this wedding.— During this time the new-married couple were besieged day and night by my noisy adherents, and the poor squire was at length obliged to disperse them by the help of constables. Aiming now at popularity in the vale, I no longer was the same character; I was kind, hospitable, charitable, and former dislikes were forgotten. Thus at Oakdale passed over another year, when my heart, rankling for revenge on Eliza, I went into Westmoreland to visit my nephew and her.— Mrs. Bertram had infused her discontent into her husband, and nothing but the fear of disobliging his father had power to restrain him from publishing to the world the whole story. The annuity which was settled on them was not large; it suited not the generous spirit of Mr. Bertram, or the pride and extravagance of his wife, and I found

them considerably embarrassed with debts they had contracted. In a letter my nephew gave me to forward to his father, he pressed him to do something to relieve their pecuniary distresses, but this letter I committed to the flames ; in consequence Mr. Bertram was arrested, and thrown into prison.

“ Eliza instantly resolved how to act ; she was mother to a little girl, whose claims, and those of Mr. Bertram’s, she would boldly assert ; she would not stoop to again solicit Sir Robert—she would be revenged upon me. With this determination she went to Acorn-bank ; to Lady Bertram she told her tale, who ordered her to be taken care of till Sir Robert’s return home. To him she related what Mrs. Bertram had informed her of, and solemnly declared, had she spoken truth, she would harass him in every possible shape ; that she would immediately withdraw herself and fortune from a man capable of so base a deception. Terrified at the idea of losing a woman who had

become necessary to his happiness (for notwithstanding the dissimilarity of their characters, he loved her with the tenderest affection, and allowing her to acquire a complete ascendancy over him, implicitly yielded to her judgment), Sir Robert hesitated.— Was he, by owning his son, to declare to Lady Bertram he had for years deceived her—that he had trepanned her into a marriage? Was he to do this, and by so doing, acknowledge himself unworthy of her, and most surely be separated from her for ever, and at the same time render the estates of Bertram and Oakdale in much the same state they were at St. Henry's death? Did he disavow the tale told by Eliza, should he survive Lady Bertram, he could publicly own his son, who at all events he would take care should inherit the title and estates of the family. He partook of my dislike to Mrs. Bertram, and was irritated at her violating the promise he had exacted: urged by these motives, he determined on his conduct,

duct, and disowning the tale, Eliza was sent in disgrace from Acorn-bank.

“ Meanwhile I released my unfortunate nephew from prison, and informed him what his wife had disclosed to Lady Bertram, and further added, Eliza was then at Oakdale in the chambers he had occupied. Agreeable to my wishes he incautiously accompanied me to the hall, and I resolved, when I had betrayed him into the concealed apartments, to confine him till I could confer with Sir Robert on the subject. Alas ! how shall I relate the scene which the following morning was presented to my sight—how convey an idea of my horror, when entering I found my wretched nephew, whose life had been one series of misfortune, stretched a breathless corpse on the floor, which was deluged with blood ! in his hand was yet clasped the pistol that had done the fatal deed ! His blood is on my head, it sits heavy on my guilty soul ! it sinks me to despair ! it cries aloud to Heaven for vengeance ! it has

fallen on me ! it has covered me with remorse ! it has drunk up every vital spring ! it has wasted me as with a slow consuming fire ! Dare I hope the expiation is made !—dare I hope my sorrows—my late repentance can atone ! Alas ! I seldom feel a ray of comfort ! all is dark—horrible—fearful ! In futurity the Almighty is just ; I bend before his inflictions, and I pray for mercy ! But yet I must proceed—yet the catalogue of my crimes is not completed.

“ In imprisoning the child of Alicia, I left him destitute of instruction, which was bestowed by Eliza, whose temper and his were widely dissimilar ; nor was it in her power to rouse him openly to oppose the will of Sir Robert. Her spirit rose against oppression ; she would have taught her husband the same sentiments, but his soul, mild and amiable, revolted at the lessons Eliza gave ; yet, when again immured in the gloomy prison where he had been reared, his hand was nerved by despair, his breast steeled

steeled by the recollection of his Eliza's maxims, and he ended a life he thought unworthy the preservation. No sooner had I recovered the first shock I received, than folding the bed clothes around the body, I conveyed it to the vault, where the family had in times long past been interred.

“ Sir Robert arrived, as I expected, in the evening ; to him I related the tragical fate of his son. He scarce would listen to me ; he would not credit what I said, till I produced a few lines addressed to his wife, that had been written in prison by my unfortunate nephew, and spoke in calm and resolved terms of the fatal deed. I offered to lead my brother by the way from the garden into the vault, but he shrank from the sight. From this hour a gloomy melancholy rested upon Sir Robert ; the world had no longer any charms for him, and he dragged out a joyless existence. On me the dreadful scene also acted ; it seemed to steel

my heart, and inure it to deeds of wickedness.

“ Eliza, when she learned her husband was released from prison by me, hastened with the young Alicia to Oakdale. I told her my nephew was sent abroad ; she would have instantly quitted the hall, but it was night, and she feared exposing her child to its damps. I then, by my conversation, gave her reason to suppose her husband was yet at Oakdale ; she feared I had again inclosed him in the gloomy chambers, and fell into the snare I had prepared for her ; at night she rose, and sought him there. No sooner did I find she had entered, than I, closing the partition, secured her where she first had beheld my nephew. When Eliza found she was my prisoner, her outcries were so loud as to be heard without, and alarm the servants. I went to the door, and threatened to remove her to the farthest dungeon. ‘ You cannot, you dare not, Mildred Bertram ; I will brave your utmost malice—

malice—I have now nought to dread—you have separated me from my husband and my child.' I promised to restore the young Alicia, provided she would cease her outcries ; but that, did she not directly submit, she should never again behold her.— She promised this, and I took the little innocent to its mother, who then demanded where her husband was. ' Already have I said he is sent abroad.'—' Mildred, (said she, with a look which penetrated my heart) he is not gone abroad ; these crimson stains certify me my husband is gone home ; he did not act well ; he should have waited for me—for the little Alicia—for we mutually swore here, if my enterprize failed, to meet ; and here, Mildred, we would not have left our child in thy power ; she would have winged her way where thou wouldest not have dared to follow. Yet, (said she, haughtily quitting me) yet vengeance may overtake thee. Thinkest thou, Mildred, I will weep my husband's fate ? No ; tears are weak, they become not my injuries.'

" I saw her desperation ; I knew she was capable of the most furious deeds. I acted with the calmest resolution, and infused opium in her food, and during its effects visited her, and found she had in her pockets pistols, a dagger, and poison. The mind of Eliza was adequate to the greatest exertions ; her soul was capable of every impression that was noble, but I had given her a wrong bent, and she was restrained by no fixed principle of religion, and I was fully convinced she meant to sacrifice me to her revenge ; but from the strict search I had made, I supposed no instrument of vengeance remained, and that I had also secured her from committing the same crime the unhappy heir of the Bertram's had. I would be for days together without visiting her, taking care to supply her with whatever necessaries she wanted for herself and child, allowing her books and materials for drawing. Sir Robert had never again visited Oakdale, where I was once more a prisoner, and we had not met for two years. He now

begged

begged I would, if possible, take the little Alicia from its mother, and give her an education suitable to her station.

“ Fearful from the state of mind in which my brother was, he would recognize this child, and thus publish his duplicity and my infamy, and also finding her engaging qualities gain an influence over me I was unwilling she should, I separated her from her mother when asleep, leaving a few lines signifying my brother’s wish regarding Alicia ; —that certain of not obtaining Mrs. Bertram’s consent, I had taken her away privately, and if she did not patiently submit to the decision, the child should suffer for its mother’s perverseness. I gave the little Alicia a sleepy potion, and by break of day, a hired chaise being at the gates, I put her into a trunk, which was placed within the carriage. At the first stage I released her ; she waked and enquired for her mother ; with sweetmeats and promises I quieted her, and her innocent caresses almost subdued me ; —those

marks

marks of affection (which in the child was real) had been artfully encouraged by Eliza, who saw the influence her amiable and beautiful child (whose features recalled to my mind the angelic woman whose name she bore) had over me. In London, whither I went, I procured from my banker five hundred pounds, and purchased a complete wardrobe for Alicia, the exact list of which will be found, and may assist in recognizing her. Again I set out, scarce knowing which way to direct the postillion, and totally at a loss how to proceed ; sometimes I thought of placing her at some school, but then the mystery which would hang over her, might cause dangerous enquiries ; chance at length assisted my resolutions. Not many miles from Northwich, in Cheshire, I was overturned, and the carriage was so broken, it could not proceed ; a little distance from the road stood a pleasant neat looking house, to which the driver went and brought assistance ; the owner with his servant returned, night advanced, and the master of the

the house offered me shelter till the carriage could be repaired ; thankfully I accepted the offer, and slipping two guineas into the hand of the postillion, told him, if he would be in the same place by break of day with a chaise and fresh horses, I would double his reward. I then followed my conductor, whose appearance was that of a substantial farmer—his wife also seemed to be a decent respectable woman ; they had a son about seven years old, and a daughter of Alicia's age, who was almost as lovely as herself. I was kindly and hospitably entertained, and at an early hour was shewn to a comfortable bed-chamber. After I had lain my innocent charge into bed, I changed my dress, and wrote on a sheet of paper, in which was folded the bills for the sum of five hundred pounds, ‘ The child which I leave is an illegitimate one, belonging to a wealthy family whom her birth disgraces ; she has been taught to call herself Alicia Bouchier, which ought to be changed to avoid any suspicion ; what her real name is, signifies not. I am a servant

fervant to the family, and was directed to dispose of the child, with the sum of 500l. as a portion for her, and to defray the expences of her bringing up. Be careful of the charge assignd you, as an eye will watch your conduct.'

" The morning broke, and without daring to look on Alicia, I quitted the house, and finding the chaise as I had appointed, I set out towards London ; knowing I should from thence be less easily traced, I stopped not in the metropolis, but hastened to Oakdale. The horrid expression of despair which sat on the countenance of Eliza, as grasping my arm she wildly enquired for her child, struck a chilly coldnes through every vein. I assured her she was well—she was happy. ' Happiness, Mildred, you have chased from this world ; my child is with her father ! If you talk to me of happiness—' ' Again I say Alicia is happy, yet she is not with her father.'— ' Mildred, you refine upon cruelty ; does your

your hatred reach the innocent Alicia? could your barbarous heart be unmoved by her caresses? Why not send her to your nephew, whose spirit would have thanked thee for the deed? Go! sharpen your dagger! seek out my child, the lovely grand-daughter of the sainted Alicia! free her, kindly free her from future tyranny!— I then quitted Eliza, and almost trembled to visit her again; her reproaches were loud, they appeared calculated to irritate me.— ‘ I fear not death, I have suffered it twice (she would say) in my husband and in separation from my child; think not, Mildred, that, when softened by my fears for her, I will be tractable. I know you fear me—I know you tremble at the idea of adding my blood to your other crimes! But where is the difference, to see it flow ruddy from my heart, or thus to allow it to congeal in my veins, and to make me suffer a living death? But yet, Mildred, vengeance shall overtake thee.’ She made various attempts to end her existence, when one night she rushed

rushed past me, and ere I could prevent her, opened the casement of Sir Philip's chamber to leap out ; the servants were none of them in that part of the house, or they would have heard her—heard the wretched Eliza loudly call for that help she was never to receive. On the table lay the dagger I had taken from her when first she was imprisoned, and as I prevented her leaping out of the window, she flew to seize this weapon, but I, who was nearer the table, first reached it ; the desperate Eliza, ere I could turn aside its point, rushed on it ; the blood gushed out. ‘ It is well, (she cried) with an undaunted air ; I am free ! Mildred, thy power is weak—thy reign is over—repentance and remorse are thine ! I go to join my husband ! ’ She walked, quickly walked, though so deeply wounded, into the chamber stained with his blood. ‘ Go, (said she) Mildred, I wish to be undisturbed.’ I left her to find something to staunch the blood, for I had no idea of the wound being dangerous. When I returned, I found

Eliza

Eliza writing with her blood ; she refused all assistance, and with such fortitude bore the pain, that ere she had well laid aside her pen, she expired. This last effort of a strong, but misguided mind, you will find, Sir Robert, amongst my papers.

“ Eliza was laid by her husband. I wrote to my brother requesting he would hasten to me. Lady Bertram was ill, was dying, and ere her funeral was well over, an apoplectic fit carried off Sir Robert.

“ I was now left as it were alone in the world, for friends I had none, and my two younger brothers, who had both borne commissions, found early graves. You then, Sir Robert, was a little boy, and your sister, who was 14 years older, had at 16 married a gay young man of the name of Meynell, against the inclination of her parents; from me she therefore was also estranged. At the death of her mother she became entitled to a handsome fortune, to spend which, with a

splendid

splendid retinue, they soon after set out for France.

“ I looked round ; I saw I had failed to attach one being to me, nor had I an attachment to any living creature ; and I was advancing to a period of life when our happiness must proceed from ourselves, when the remembrance of a well-spent life must cheer its evening, though we may be surrounded by friends our virtues and amiable qualities have endeared us to. To look back filled me with remorse—I had secured no one friend ; and to look forward into eternity I dared not. The day of vengeance so oft denounced by Eliza was at hand ; I who used to ridicule the weak and superstitious minds on whom I had been at so much trouble to impose, now started at my own shadow, and fearful of the vicinity which my room had to the concealed chambers, changed my apartment into the opposite wing, and had the door of Sir Philip’s chamber nailed up. Nightly visions disturbed

turbed me—the bloody spectres of my nephew and Eliza seemed to denounce my doom.

“ I quitted Oakdale, of which I had a lease, and resolved to take home the little Alicia, for whom my fortune should accumulate, as no provision had been made by my brother for her, he, as you know, Sir Robert, dying intestate. I went straight from the hall to the house where I had left Alicia, but I found her not ; its inhabitants were gone no one could tell me where ; it was believed they originally came from London,—they might be returned there ; but their residence had been short in Cheshire, where they had taken a large dairy farm, though they were strangers to the management of it, and it not answering, they had left it very suddenly soon after I had been there. Hopeless of success, I went to London, where, by advertising and offering rewards, I made all possible enquiry ; but finding my endeavours fruitless,

less, I tried, amidst hurry and dissipation, to lull my conscience. In an excursion I made to Bath I was nearly becoming the wife of a sharper; and rejoicing at my escape, determined to avoid all offers of marriage, and in one of the most opulent towns in the north of England took a handsome house, which I made, by the elegant entertainments I gave, the resort and envy of the circle in which I lived and presided. But vain was every trial I made; happiness was fled; and whilst caressed and looked up to as a model of perfection, as a creature who lived so as to diffuse that comfort she enjoyed, I endured the keenest torments—I dared not to be one moment alone. Again I tried change of place, and had once more no settled abode. I had never been in Scotland, and resolved to make a journey there. In passing through the county of Durham I determined to visit Oakdale, where Martha, who had lived long with me, remained, as also the gardener, her husband. It was evening when I arrived—I entered by the hall door—I was over.

overpowered by recollection, and threw myself on a seat ; at that instant a peal of thunder seemed to shake the house, and the lightning flashed through the open door and the painted window—again the thunder rolled heavy over my head. Martha had left me on my entrance, and the men were gone to the stables ; the third flash, yet more vivid than the former, attracted by the armour which hung near me, entered the hall ; I fell senseless on the floor ; the tremendous crash of this peal, and the falling of the armour, brought back Martha, who, as she beheld me, concluded I was dead ; my clothes and hair were singed, as well as one arm, and I was also considerably bruised by the picture, painted upon wood, of Sir Philip Bertram (the fastening of which had been burnt equally with those of the armour) falling upon me. Restored to life, I looked round and beheld the picture ; my eyes rested on the sentence wrote below it, which was part of the oath taken when the secret of the concealed apartments was communicated

cated to me, as had been always the custom :  
' For ever accursed is the person who dares to tread with unhallowed steps, for guilty or profane purposes, the sacred retreat of piety.' I closed my eyes, and leaned upon the shoulder of Martha, who cried, and talked between each flash of lightning of death and judgment—words terrible to my ears. The storm abated, I went to my chamber, where a severe fever seized me. Oh ! the terrible visions which my delirious fancy presented ! they are yet present—they yet seem to pursue me !

" At last by slow degrees I recovered, but long laboured under extreme debility. No sooner was I restored to health, than dismissing my servants, all but those who before had been left at Oakdale, I set out on foot, and meanly clad, on a pilgrimage to seek Alicia ; but though it lasted almost two years, I yet returned to Oakdale unsuccessful.

Mr.

“ Mr. Meynell had dissipated his own and wife’s fortune, and was gone out to India. I took therefore Mrs. Meynell and her son to the hall ; to her I in part confessed my crimes, and revealed to her the secret of the concealed chambers, where I had resolved to end my days. I entered on a life of penitence, and saw only Mrs. Meynell, or at certain times, in Sir Philip’s chamber, Martha. Sometimes I would indulge myself, by walking at midnight on the terrace, but no longer did the sun shine on me. I learned to handle the ax and the saw, and constructed a wooden tomb over the remains of my nephew and Eliza, on which were laid figures of wax, representing them bleeding and dying. My next employment was to work the black cloth, intended for hangings to the place where my remains were to be deposited, with emblematical figures on the pall for a covering ; a wax image similar to that which I had caused to be entombed at St. Mary’s, as the heir of Sir Robert Bertram, was my next sad task. I have

slept in the chamber stained with the blood of my unfortunate kinsman and Eliza, whilst suspended over me hung the bloody dagger. My dress has been coarse, my food homely and sparing, and thus for eighteen years have I lived amidst scenes of horror, which for ever recalled my guilt, reminded me of mortality, and bade me prepare to render up to a just Judge an account of my actions. My days are now near their close ; this packet will then, Sir Robert, be given you by your sister, after have been buried at St. Mary's Oak ;— my last will too is in my niece's possession, in which I have constituted you, Sir Robert, executor and trustee for Alicia, should she be found ; an annuity is set aside for Mrs. Meynell, at whose death, and after a certain period elapsing without tidings of Alicia, all centers in you."

Thus ended the narrative of crimes, the reading of which had most deeply shocked our heroine ; oft had she laid it down, and looked

looked fearfully around her, and as oft, resuming her fortitude, had again continued to read. It was morning when Alicia entered, and she now saw through the narrow windows in the roof, that the dun shade of evening had closed over the horizon.— Alicia thought not of those events which so recently had befallen her, and, sadly occupied with the horrid recital of Mildred Bertram, no longer found the idea of Lord Trewarne obtrude itself on her imagination, nor longer seemed to remember she had fled from his emissaries, or that if not dead, he was dying by her hand. The agonized cries of Eliza she almost imagined yet echoed through the gloomy chambers, and the amiable heir of the last Baronet of Oakdale, bleeding and dying, appeared portrayed by her imagination. Now she again perused the nearly-obliterated writing of Mrs. Bertram, which accident had separated, she supposed, from the other papers, nor could she wonder at the strong impression which Henry Bertram had received from its per-

rusal ; the mutilated state it was in, and the similarity of names, sufficiently authorised also the idea, that it was written by the mother of our heroine.

It was nearly dark ; Alicia rose, and lighted her candle by the means her prudent foresight had procured. She felt her head giddy, her ideas wandering and confused ; she remembered what Mr. Bertram had said regarding his extreme sufferings of mind when last amidst these passages and vaults, and feared she might also, like him, sustain a deprivation of reason. Seating herself again, she took a part of those refreshments she had provided at Malieveren, and supposing she was able to go through the remainder of the papers, began to read that which was fastened to the end of Mildred's narrative.— This was written by Mr. Bouchier, and contained the following words :—

“ I it was, Eliza, who found retired, amidst wilds and woods, the blooming Alicia,  
the

the beauteous grand-daughter of Sir Robert Bertram ! I saw her.—I loved—I poured out at her feet the passion she had inspired, regardless of the difference which wealth and station had apparently made ; she appeared as the queen amongst the village maids—she listened to my vows. The person, who I supposed was her father, told me the strange tale of her being left with him, and gave me an account of the money and clothes that had been provided for her use ; the money was expended, but he gave me Alicia Bouchier. My father heard of my love, and we were separated by him soon after a daughter was born, who bore the name (which Alicia believed was that of her mother,) Eliza.— When I was at liberty to search for my child, it and its guardian had long quitted the village where it was born. Eight years was I separated from my adored Alicia ; again we met—a few short years only flew over our heads before she quitted me for ever.—No child was left—all had died ;—in mourning their deaths and that of my be-

loved Alicia's, grief triumphed over reason. I forsook home—I eloped from the kind, but to me troublesome watchings of friendship—I wandered to St. Mary's. I beheld you, Eliza, and aided, perhaps, by fancy, by the derangement of my mind, and the enthusiasm of my character, imagined in you I beheld my lost, my worshipped Alicia restored to me, all blooming as when first I loved. Already do you know how I discovered the concealed apartments ; anxiously solicitous to further investigate the story, in which I was so closely, so deeply interested, I found means, which now I will not relate, to trace the child of Alicia from whence I left her, to St. Mary's Oak. The funeral which I had witnessed when I first reached it, was that of the person who, then bearing a different name, had reared the daughter of Mr. Bertram and Eliza Bouchier—who had revealed to me her being abandoned by her friends—who at the sacred altar had joined my hand to Alicia's—and who, for reasons which I do not exactly comprehend, had,

by

by changing his place of residence and name, concealed my child.—Alas ! fatal concealment ! You, Eliza, I tremble as I write, you, Eliza, are the daughter of Alicia ! You are, horror is in the sound, you are the child of the wretched Frederic, who goes to search for one person, who, if alive, can alone solve some doubts that yet remain.”

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## CHAPTER IX.

THERE was yet another paper—it was a letter from Mrs. Bouchier to our heroine, and contained an exact description of the face and person of Mr. Bouchier, that if he yet lived, Alicia might recognize him by it ; there was likewise a portrait of him, which he had himself given to Eliza. As Alicia

alternately gazed on it, and again recurred to her mother's description, her eyes swam, her heart sickened, and both papers and portrait fell from her hand. Recovering from the first emotion of surprise, and horrid astonishment, she exclaimed, "Do my senses forsake me, as I feared, amidst these scenes of terror! do I dream!" Then falling on her knees, "Mighty God! (she claimed) how intricate are thy ways! how weak, how short-sighted are we mortals thou hast created! how sinfully do we murmur at thy decrees! Oh! hast thou ordained a daughter's hand to punish——"

"Alicia rose, and again read the description, again gazed on the portrait; no, she could not mistake, Frederic Bouchier and Frederic Fitz-Harman, Earl of Tre-warne, were the same. One mark of identity alone would have convinced Alicia it was so, had there been no other. Her mother said, that on the upper part of the right shoulder was a large red mark, and below that

that the scar of a wound which reached almost to the elbow, and was again seen below it. This Alicia had remarked when she assisted in binding up the wound she had inflicted ; alike did the description of her father's features and person agree with those of Lord Trewarne ; so did the portrait.—“ It is, (said she, with a firm tone of voice) it is *my father!* The early misfortunes he sustained, his long estrangement from his friends, all convince me !—I will not shrink from my duty, but haste, and ere too late beg his forgiveness.” Alicia descended the stairs, and passing through the blood-stained chamber, entered that of Sir Philip's, the door of which into the gallery stood open.

Silence and darkness filled the gallery ; she threw her eyes along it fearfully.—Lord Trewarne, it was probable, was dead, and though doubtless she had already been sought, by the fastenings being removed from the door of the apartment in which she had been confined ; yet the officers of justice

might remain and seize her—a shameful imprisonment and ignominious death might be her's. Agonized almost to distraction by these reflections, Alicia, with a palpitating heart, passed along the gallery, determined to seek her father, dead or alive. A ray of light beamed through a half-closed door; without noise she pushed it open; a taper that burnt on the table, by its rays faintly illumined the middle of the chamber, whose sides, hung with dark green damask corresponding with the bed, received them not; the curtains were closed on the side Alicia entered. She paused; perhaps there might be stretched the dead body of the parent she had slain; a few steps, and this horrid sight might be disclosed. These steps were taken, Lord Tre-warne lay on the bed, not as Alicia had feared, but asleep, and by him, on an easy chair, in the same state, sat his valet.

Alicia kneeled by the bed, and pulling out the portrait, compared it with the features of the sleeping Earl; they seemed  
the

the same, allowing for the difference between the ages, which must be more than twenty years; yet the countenance of Lord Trevarne wore not that air of ingenuousness which was displayed in his miniature resemblance, nor had his Lordship, as he slept, that noble and dignified expression, or that look of extreme sensibility, which she had observed in his waking hours in a degree that precisely corresponded with the portrait she held. In a free commerce with the world frankness of character is very often lost, and the other change Alicia thought could be easily accounted for; her father, though naturally amiable, had yet, she feared, of late indulged himself in vices contrary to his original conduct. Thoroughly convinced she had found the parent whom she had till that night considered as having died ere she was born—with a low and impassioned voice, prayed the Almighty to restore her father to health, and to grant she might be allowed to shew her filial tenderness to him, and

that she might, by her dutiful attention, obliterate the memory of his former sufferings. The sleep of Lord Trewarne grew disturbed ; and though not yet awake, he talked in a quick and agitated manner ; then hastily lifting his head, he beheld the kneeling Alicia.

“ Oh ! take her away, take her away !” he cried, in a voice loud enough to waken his valet, who on beholding our heroine, swore he thought she was one of the ghosts that lived in Oakdale, and were here and there, every where and no where. “ Oh ! take her away, hide her, bury her again,” exclaimed Lord Trewarne, in a tone of agony.

“ Who, my Lord ! what bury Miss Sleigh ?” said his unfeeling attendant, as with a careless air he threw his arm round her waist.

“ Compose yourself,” said Alicia, as darting a look of contempt on Watkins, she seated herself by Lord Trewarne.

“ So

“ So now, (cried Watkins, with a saucy freedom in his manner) you have chosen to quit your hiding-place, to nurse the Earl.”

“ I do intend it ; for this sole purpose am I here, and here, where a sense of duty has brought me, shall I stay.”

“ No longer, I assure you, than I chuse. My lord’s life depends upon his being kept quiet, and no one shall disturb him ; a pretty piece of work his Lordship has made of it, indeed (continued his valet, as he took our heroine’s hand, and led her out, who saw to oppose would make an uproar that might be detrimental to the Earl) ; a pretty piece of work, indeed, (continued he) ; I knew what it would end in ; no sooner had you your full swing, than back you came ; had you but, after my Lord was at the trouble of taking you into Scotland, considered what you would be at, he would, to my knowledge, have married you ; and had you, Miss Sleigh, been kind enough to have visited his Lordship two nights ago in the way you did this, he would not now be laying,

laying, as I think, a dying, nor would you stand the chance of having a halter about that fair neck of your's."

Watkins led Alicia to an apartment in the west wing of the hall, and locking her in, bade her good night, or rather, he said, good morning, for the day had broke ere she quitted the chamber of Lord Trewarne.— The room was a well-remembered one by our heroine, to whose use it had, in her childish days, been appropriated as a play-room, and it still displayed marks of those amusements; here lay a doll she remembered was presented her by Mr. Kirby, and in another place several trifles made by her mother. The tears gushed from the eyes of Alicia as she viewed these tokens of a mother's fond attention to her pleasure and infantine amusement; sadly she felt, as she recalled those days of happy infancy, when she was all her unfortunate mother had in the world to make her wish for life. "Ah! little (sighed Alicia) did I know, when

kissing

kissing off the starting tear as my mother bent over me, from what a deep sense of agony they flowed ! Ah ! my beloved parent, never till now did I know the vast extent of my obligations to thee, never till now was I fully sensible of thy worth ! Kindly didst thou conceal the tale fraught with horror—alas ! had I known it, how would my young mind have supported the sad knowledge ! yet, by bidding me look forward to a certain period for unravelling the scene, you, when revealing, bade me conceal, I learned to suffer in silence ; and by appointing a period when my reason had acquired some strength, and ere it might be supposed I had exchanged duty for love, thou hoped to save me from forming, as thou hadst done, some hasty connexion fraught with misery.” Alicia paused ; her thoughts, even amidst the horrors by which she was surrounded, turned to Henry Bertram. Her father would sanction her choice ; she was not now a poor dependant on the bounty of the Bertrams ; in early life Lord

Trewarne had been the chosen friend of Sir Robert ;—thus through the gloom that surrounded her a bright ray of hope streamed, and irradiated the future.

About eight o'clock Watkins brought some breakfast to his prisoner, but scarce deigned to answer her enquiries after his Lord. At four he again made his appearance with some refreshment, and as before gave short and unsatisfactory answers.

One window of the room in which Alicia was confined, gave her a transient view of the road over the low wall of the terrace, and at this window she spent the greatest part of the day, in hopes of attracting the attention of some of the few passengers. Anxiously did she wish to escape, as little would her new-discovered affinity to the Earl have, if now disclosed, protected her from the insolence of his valet, which effectually prevented her wished attendance on her father. She wrote with her pencil on a slip of paper, a billet

billet to Captain Barlow, who she supposed, ere this, would be returned to St. Mary's, and did not doubt, could she get her note conveyed to him, of being released from her present uncomfortable situation. But those passengers who passed Oakdale Hall, appeared as if they feared, by lifting their eyes towards it, they should behold one of its reputed inhabitants, and our heroine's attempts were without success. The apartment in which she was being at a considerable distance from that of Lord Trewarne, she heard no sound, save at times steps in that end of the gallery, out of which a separate passage led to the rooms in the west wing of the hall; yet these steps approached not her.

## CHAPTER X.

THE evening closed in; Alicia felt heavy for want of rest; throwing herself on the floor; and leaning her head on her hand, she fell asleep, but was awaked soon after by a kind of bustle in a distant part of the house.—This lasted not long; again all was silence, and again Alicia slept, but was waked suddenly by a noise near at hand, and footsteps were heard in the passage. She rose; it was apparently midnight from the darkness; voices were distinguishable, which, from the echo, she supposed proceeded from people

people ascending the staircase; doors flapped, and all was noise and uproar. Looking from the window that fronted the court, she saw lights in the east wing, where she had seen Lord Trewarne, but they did not seem stationary, as by turns every room was enlightened. Alicia feared, conjectured, and was now almost certain her fears were verified—her father was dead—she was his murderer—and the body being removed had caused the bustle in the house; the idea chilled her with horror—she leaned against the wall—the light disappeared from the eastern side of the hall—the noise was hushed—and all was again profound silence, which to Alicia seemed that of death itself. Unable longer to bear the cruel uncertainty, she struck a light, determined, if in her power, to force the lock, and endeavour to gain information; but whilst she had slept, some one had entered the room, for the door stood open. Taking her taper, Alicia quitted the spot so oft the witness of her childish enjoyments, and reached the gallery, where,

where, as she listened, no sound assailed her ears. Again she proceeded, and stopped as she heard the echo of her own steps returned from the solitary walls; then, resolving to give herself no time to deliberate, she turned into the chamber where she had beheld Lord Trewarne, and where now, she supposed, lay his breathless corpse. The room was wholly dark, save as far as the scanty rays of the taper she held, reached; the curtains were drawn round the bed, and as Alicia advanced, she felt her resolution almost desert her. Could she bear the sight of her father murdered by her own hand! she turned—she would search for some of the people she had heard—but again she banished the thought, as the saucy freedom of Watkins's manner darted across her mind, and her hand again rested on the curtain; with a sudden jerk she drew it back—her taper was extinguished.—Amidst all the horrors by which she had been surrounded of late, Alicia hitherto had preserved her presence of mind; but now, seized with all the wildness

ness of fear, and totally destitute of that composure she hitherto had apparently preserved, she screamed aloud, as she supposed she saw, (for it was too dark to distinguish with exactness,) the body of Lord Trewarne stretched on the bed, and surrounded by the insignias of death. Rushing out, the terrified Alicia fled along the gallery, and entering an apartment, the door of which stood open, sunk on the floor ;—at that instant she saw she was in Sir Philip's room ; the closet-door stood open, and through the bloody chamber she saw advance a figure that bore the likeness of Lord Trewarne, but ere it reached her, deprived of sense and motion, Alicia lay breathless on the floor. It was some time ere she recovered, so as to become sensible of her existence, and then found she was laid on a bed, and Henry Bertram kneeling by her, who held one of her hands ; with a look expressive of strong anxiety, “ Thank God, (said Henry) she lives.”

Alicia's

Alicia's eyes were fixed on Mr. Bertram, but yet she spoke not ; raising her head she looked round—“ Is this reality ? are you, indeed, with me, Henry ?”

“ It is real, my Alicia, it is Henry, who kneeling by you, hopes never again to be parted from you.”

Again she looked around ; “ sure I am not awake, or I may be deceived by my imagination—my head is light. I have suffered much, Henry, and just now I thought I saw Lord Trewarne, whom I supposed dead, well—alive—walking through the concealed chamber.”

“ You were not deceived, my beloved Alicia,” said a voice which resembled that of his Lordship ; and the same figure, she had before seen, advanced. It was, and it was not Lord Trewarne ; a different expression sat on his countenance—he appeared older ;—the hair of Lord Trewarne, even in powder, might be known to be a bright shade of pale brown—the hair of this person was grey

“ No,

“ No, (said Alicia, shrinking from his touch, and hiding her face on the shoulder of Mr. Bertram) no, you are not my father ! whoever you are, seek not to impose on me—I have murdered my father !”

“ My dear child, (said the same person, who moving Henry, took his place) do not thus agitate yourself ; I am indeed your father, now your only parent, Alicia ! I was the husband of Eliza—I was the Earl of Trewarne, who assumed the feigned name of Bouchier. Since I have quitted Oakdale, I have met with many hardships—I have known much sorrow ; after an absence of so many years, kill me not by seeing you thus ! You are indeed my child—too long has an artful villain separated us.”

“ Alicia, (said Mr. Bertram) do you think I would impose on you ? will you not credit Henry Bertram, when he tells you this is Lord Trewarne, the long lost friend of my father, and the Earl of Knaresborough ? You have credited, Alicia, the artful villain who usurped your father’s name and title,

who

who dared not shew himself till Sir Robert had quitted England. It was this villain who defamed William March—whose intrigues threw him into prison; to this wretch, abandoned to every crime, does Lord Morville owe his ruin."

Alicia seemed to forget her late indisposition, as lightly springing from the bed, and throwing herself at her father's feet, she begged he would blefs the child of his Eliza. Alicia was raised, and embraced by a parent she had till that hour never beheld.—Loud sobs from a person, who stood concealed by the curtains, attracted the attention of our heroine, and the next minute was she in the arms of this stranger.

" Kirby, (said her father) you terrify Alicia."

" Who I! No, no, she will not be terrified at me, it was you she was frightened at."

" Mr. Kirby, (said Alicia) my best, my dearest friend! how is it that I again, when I ceased to hope it, see you?"

" Oh!

“ Oh ! it is a long tale, it is not possible to tell you,” said the worthy surgeon, wiping his eyes.

“ For what am I (exclaimed our heroine) reserved ! I am surrounded by wonders—I behold friends I have long known, that are very dear ! and I have found a father I learned to love, when I knew not he existed!”

“ When you are more composed, Alicia, you shall learn my story,” said her father.

Henry walked to the window by which he had entered Oakdale when he visited the concealed chambers. “ The sun has been risen some time ; had we not better, my Lord, set out ?”

“ By all means ; we shall, I hope, find the whole party by this time at Malieveren.”

“ Dowego then to Malieveren ? (enquired Alicia) ; is Lady Bertram at the Castle ?”

“ Ere this I expect so,” replied her father.

“ Before we quit Oakdale, my father, let me inform you in one of its apartments lays the man who usurped your name, who has

persecuted your daughter, killed by her hand." Briefly then she recounted her adventures since she entered the hall, every part of which was searched, but neither Lord Tre-warne nor his servants could be found.— Alicia had seen him raving with delirium, from pain and fever, in the green damask chamber, and from thence, doubtless, his servants had in the dusk of the evening conveyed him, as the mattress and blankets had been taken away.

Again supported by Mr. Bertram, did our heroine descend the staircase of Oakdale Hall, but not now, as before, ignorant who were her parents, or that either of them lived. She was now accompanied by a father, whom she was convinced possessed many amiable qualities, of a rank in life which made no longer her alliance a disgrace to the noblest or proudest family. The carriage, which Alicia knew was Sir Robert's, drove up to the gates, and she was lifted into it by her father and Henry, who she

saw had not yet regained his former look of health and strength.

“ Mr. Bertram, (said the Earl) we forget every thing in our joy at finding Alicia ; but some steps are necessary to be taken in order to secure this artful villain.”

“ Suppose we wait here, and send to Jackson, (said Mr. Bertram) who will omit nothing to prevent his escape ; or I will take one of the horses, and ride over to St. Mary’s.”

Alicia, (who since she had beheld the friends by whom she now was surrounded) thought not till that instant of Captain Barlow, who would be uneasy, if he was returned, at her absence, proposed they all should go to St. Mary’s.

The good doctor rubbed his hands, and clapping Alicia’s shoulder, said, “ Aye, aye, my dear, let us all go, if it is but to set the folks of the village a gaping ; I believe,

though we are in the Baronet's carriage, and the liveries so well known, if I put out my head, not a soul dare approach us ; for when I lived at Oakdale it was supposed I held correspondence not only with the spirits in it, but with the very devil himself, after I had that visit from that infernal——”

Henry, laughing, told Kirby he was self-convicted.

“ True, true, but I think the devil will soon, in my opinion, quit his burning chair, to let this fiend sit down, when I shall fear no more from his visits.”

CHAPTER XI.

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LORD Trewarne had ordered the postillions to drive to Mr. Jackson's, St. Mary's Oak, towards which they were now going. Much was said, but the discourse was so incoherent and unconnected, that were I to relate it, without the guiding clue, which was in the possession of the three gentlemen, my readers would, like my heroine, feel lost in a labyrinth of amazement.

When Sir Robert Bertram's carriage stopped at Mr. Jackson's door, all were in bed but the maid servant, who was opening

the window shutters ; but staring at the equipage, had the enquiry twice repeated to her, “ if her master was at home ? ” ere she answered. She then said, “ her master came home late last night, and had not got up.”

“ Go (said the Earl) tell Mr. Jackson Mr. Bertram wishes to see him instantly.”

“ Yes, your Worship, Mr. Sir Robert.”

“ Kirby, out of all patience, had got out at the other side of the carriage, and before the girl had finished her courtesies, was by Mr. Jackson’s bedside, whom the noise at his door having awaked, was just going to rise to know what had caused it.

“ Jackson, my old friend, how art thou ? (said the good surgeon, holding out his hand) how goes the world ? ”

The face of Jackson turned as pale as the linen that surrounded it.—“ Kirby ! the Devil ! ”

“ Aye, there now, so I said ; no sooner am I seen, than you think of his infernal highness.”

Jackson,

Jackson, recovering from his surprise, shook hands most cordially with his friend, and Mrs. Jackson also congratulated him on his return. On her Mr. Kirby passed some of his old jokes, that perfectly satisfied her as to his identity, after which he reminded Mr. Jackson Sir Robert's carriage stood at the door, to which they immediately went, and Mr. Bertram saying he would step in and speak to Mr. Jackson, the whole party were asked to honour him with their company to breakfast. This proposal was agreed to, and soon after Mrs. Jackson made her appearance, when after paying her respects to the company, she enquired of her husband if Captain Barlow had risen?

“ Is Captain Barlow here,” said Alicia.

“ Yes, Madam, (replied Mr. Jackson) we were at Penrith yesterday, and we found the people at the Cross Keys in bed at our return, so he took up his quarters with us for the night.”

The door opened; Captain Barlow appeared, and Alicia advancing, took his

hand, and introduced him to her father, as  
“ Captain Barlow, the son, my Lord, of  
the guardians of my mother.”

“ I remember (said his Lordship) the  
features of this gentleman, though upwards  
of thirty, nay almost forty years have passed  
since I saw him. But why not, Alicia, in-  
troduce Captain Barlow as your relation, the  
only one, perhaps, on the side of your grand-  
mother you now have ?”

“ Captain Barlow, my Lord, informed  
me of our supposed affinity; but since I saw  
him, I have visited Oakdale, and know who  
my unfortunate mother was.”

This affair was still further discussed,  
but at present we will pass over the conver-  
sation on that subject. The business which  
brought the party to St. Mary’s Oak was next  
talked of, and Mrs. Jackson said, “ that  
after it was dark last night she went to the  
Cross Keys to enquire if Captain Barlow had  
returned, as she was uneasy at her husband’s  
stay, and was sitting with Mrs. Crofts when

four people brought a gentleman, apparently dying, upon a bed to the door, and offered any sum to have the sick person accommodated." Little doubt remained that this was the wretch that was sought.

Mr. Bertram and Kirby instantly set out for the village inn, where they found the ci-devant Earl in the utmost danger, as till this morning, when a surgeon had been sent for from North Oak, he had received no assistance but from Watkins, his valet.

Lord Trewarne now judged it needful he should remain at St. Mary's, in order to seize any opportunity that might occur of speaking with the usurper of his name; and Alicia, now she had found her father, was equally unwilling as he was to be separated, and Henry declared he would also remain where he was, as the Earl might require his assistance. It was therefore agreed that a servant should be dispatched with an account of the cause that detained the

party at St. Mary's Oak, to Malieveren.— Alicia, with Lord Trewarne, remained at Mr. Jackson's, and the other three gentlemen were accommodated in the village.

The days of our heroine were clouded by the extreme anxiety she felt for the life of her persecutor:—so much was she shocked by being the cause of his untimely death, as to become almost insensible to the blessings she was surrounded by—approved by her father, loved by Henry Bertram, who now had no reason to conceal his attachment, which was fully sanctioned by the Earl. Assistance was called from all the neighbouring towns, and Mr. Kirby joined his skill with the most celebrated surgeons in the adjacent counties, to save the life of a man he most cordially detested. Vainly did her father and lover strive to reconcile our heroine to the probability of the death of a villain, by telling her she acted but in her own defence; and by repeating his consummate acts of wickedness, reconciled her to the justice of the deed.

deed. Each hour had been expected would be the last of this wretch's sufferings on earth, when Mr. Kirby entered, and announced that the inflammation had subsided considerably since they had been able to extract the ball from the wound, and that the fever was also abated ; this, as it gave joy to Alicia, seemed to inspire all her friends with new life. The same day the party from Malieveren arrived at Oakdale, which had once more undergone some trifling repairs to render it habitable. In a few days the gentlemen of the faculty pronounced their patient out of immediate danger, and the now happy Alicia removed, with her father, to Oakdale Hall.

As soon as it was judged safe to do so, his real situation was explained to the ci-devant Earl of Trewarne, and he received a visit from the man he had injured, whose rights he had usurped, and who was accompanied by several of the party from Oakdale, amongst whom was the Baron Kaphausen,

a title conferred by his Lordship. Whether the impostor, finding all his schemes over-turned, and most of them openly detected, thought the best plan for working upon Lord Trewarne, whose generous soul he well knew, was to act the penitent, or that, (which I would rather hope) he really was so, I, who cannot judge of other people's hearts, can by no means determine. Lord Trewarne accepted his repentance as an unfeigned one, and in return for one of the most valuable presents his Lordship ever received, settled on him an annuity for his life, after having listened to a full confession of his crimes ; but as this confession is so interwoven with the history of Lord Trewarne, I believe, by giving them together, they will be easier comprehended.

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**CHAPTER XII.**

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WILLIAM FITZ HARMAN, the eighth Earl of Trewarne of that family, married Mary Mackenzie, Baronesse St. Andrews, who died after a few years, leaving one son, to whom her title devolved, although by a previous settlement it was supposed her estate remained the Earl's during his life—I say supposed, for it was not in the power of the Baronesse to separate them. Lady Trewarne had taken, as a companion, a relation of her own, who was left at the death of improvident parents destitute of support.

Warmly

Warmly was Miss M'Rae recommended to the Earl's future countenance by the dying Countess, over whose loss they mutually wept. His Lordship offered this lady an asylum in his house; vain and artful, this was joyfully accepted by Miss M'Rae, who already in her own mind was Countess of Trewarne. In process of time the Earl's sorrows abated, and the charms of Miss M'Rae made the impression she had wished. She imagined the summit of her hopes was nearly attained, but Lord Trewarne was a man of the world, and had, ere his marriage, been well versed in the arts of seduction; he saw the aim of Miss M'Rae, and thus held himself excusable in parrying and retorting these schemes in which she was not sufficiently versed to cope with his Lordship, who made her the victim of them at the moment she had vainly fancied her triumph was at its accomplishment. Miss M'Rae was established, though not as the Countess of Trewarne, which she had expected, but as the mistress of the Earl, by whom she was

placed

placed at the head of his household. In this station her natural talents for intrigue were so far improved by the knowledge she gained of the world, and that part of it best calculated for improving those talents, that in a few years after Lady Trewarne's decease, had Miss M'Raе had the same part again to sustain, she would, in all probability, have succeeded in her high-raised hopes; nor did those hopes desert her, for various were the attempts she made to obtain the coronet worn by her cousin, but the time was pasted.

Report says several children were born, who all died before they could lisp out papa to his Lordship; till about eight years after the death of the Countess, Miss M'Raе presented the Earl with a son, who was honoured by having the name of William conferred on him. This child was a striking likeness, his mother said, of his Lordship, but as he grew up, he yet more strongly resembled Lord St. Andrews; their features seemed,

seemed, like their persons, cast in the same mould ; but there was one most striking difference—Lord St. Andrews's hair was a light shade of brown, which inclined to the chesnut, and hung in glossy curls over his open forehead ; young M'Rae's was a fiery red, with thick heavy eyebrows of the same colour, that at once gave a gloom and fierceness to his look, and disfigured his eyes, which, like those of his brother, were uncommonly fine and bright hazel.

Miss M'Rae had gained a most absolute ascendancy over the Earl, who made her will in general his, except that he uniformly declared he would never marry her, and, for her sake, never any other woman. Miss M'Rae had always appeared extremely fond of Lord St. Andrews, although she had secretly taken every pains to undermine the Earl's affection for a son, whose amiable temper, and whose goodness of heart, secured the esteem and love of all but herself.

Lord

Lord St. Andrews, now about seventeen, was, with his father's knowledge, upon a visit to a family in Herefordshire; from thence his Lordship, without declaring to the Earl his intention, set out on a tour into the neighbouring principality. Pleased with the situation of Llanmorden, a romantically seated village in Glamorganshire, he stopped at the little inn. At Llanmorden then dwelt Mr. Barlow, renting a considerable piece of ground, and apparently in opulent circumstances; his son vying with the neighbouring squires, and his two beautiful daughters the toast and envy of that and the adjacent parishes. Lord St. Andrews saw the lovely girls, and his heart, which yet had not learned to love, instantly bowed to the fascinating charms of the youngest Miss Barlow. Young, ardent in his temper, romantic in his ideas of happiness, Lord St. Andrews supposed it alone dwelt at Llanmorden, that alone could Alicia Barlow inspire his heart with those sentiments of love which engrossed his whole mind,

which

which animated every look, and seemed to have infused a new being into his soul—she was alone capable of giving an impression no power on earth could erase! Too generous to think of disparity of fortune—too little attached to splendour of station to remember his rank or her humble lot, and too much in love to recollect his father would not approve his choice, Lord St. Andrew poured forth, in impassioned tones, his animated hopes, his love to Alicia, who, disowning not a mutual flame, yet referred her lover to her father. Lord St. Andrews, hastening to Mr. Barlow, told his tale—begged he would trust to his honour, that though family reasons obliged him to conceal his name, yet he was the child of a wealthy parent, who would not, when once made, disapprove his choice.

Mr. Barlow had lived at an expence considerably beyond his income. Pleased by the open frankness of the stranger, by the dignity of his manner—also judging he was highly

highly born, (Alicia he also imagined was so) thought himself authorised to unfold her tale, and give his consent to a match that promised to place her in a station suitable to her birth. Mr. Barlow then related to Lord St. Andrews the circumstances already mentioned regarding the child of Mr. Bertram and Eliza Bouchier being left at the farmhouse, near Northwich, mentioning the sum of money, which ere now was expended, and the schedule of her wardrobe, which was produced.

Lord St. Andrews, far from being disengaged in his addresses by this relation, felt himself more interested for the beautiful Alicia Bouchier, abandoned by her friends, than for Alicia Barlow, surrounded by them. In a few days Alicia Bertram became his.—This match certainly was not a prudent one on either side, yet, when it is considered the united ages of this very youthful couple did not amount to thirty-three, it cannot be supposed a large stock

stock was at that period in their possession. Alicia's choice too had been sanctioned by Mr. Barlow, who found he could no longer support her in the way he had done, and which, as I before observed, influenced his resolution.

After an absence that caused much enquiry to be made regarding it, Lord St. Andrews returned to Trewarne House, nor was it long before Miss M'Raе found out his Lordship's secret, and took care, though not from her, the Earl should also learn it. She, though appearing to act the part of mediatrix, artfully fanned the flame she pretended to allay. So closely was Lord St. Andrews watched, that he could not even get a letter conveyed to his beloved Alicia, before he was sent with his tutor abroad, and then Miss M'Raе prevented his letters ever reaching her for whom they were intended.

At Llanmorden Lord St. Andrews was not known by his real name, for even from his

his lady had he concealed it, flattering himself with soon again visiting her, and, authorised by his father, declaring his title, introduce her to his family as his wife. At a time when she supposed she was abandoned by her husband, did Alicia give birth to a daughter, who, in memory of her mother, she christened Eliza.— Scarcely was she recovered, when she received a letter, as written by her husband, informing her of his father's displeasure, and of his sending him abroad; that he dared not cross the sea to attend her, but begged she would instantly set out, as he would wait her arrival at Ostend, from whence his letter was dated, and inclosed money for the expences of her journey and voyage. This letter also spoke of the birth of her child, which was desired to be left at Llanmorden.

Alicia, thus deluded by the insidious M'Rae, left her child at Llanmorden, and reached a place where in vain was the search she made for Mr. Mackenzie, the name  
Lord

Lord St. Andrews was known to her by.—Her money exhausted, and in a country to whose language she was a stranger, the charity of a British lady relieved her, and brought her to England ;—this was Miss M'Raie, and Alicia was in Trewarne House, when she was commanded to give up her claims on her husband, whose ruin she would be if she refused ; that he already had promised not again to behold her, and if she attempted to see him, should he repent of his oath, he was for ever an outcast from his friends, deprived of a fortune that should otherwise be his ; and if she agreed not to a separation, she should be imprisoned for life, and never behold her husband or child. The latter should have an ample fortune assigned her, and in a few years be restored to her ; she also should have a handsome provision.

Alicia paused ; her husband had doubtless abandoned her—he had, perhaps, been obliged to do so, and she was looked upon as his ruin.—Alas ! to promote his interest could any

any sacrifice be too great?—nought should have weight with her—every selfish consideration should yield to that. But then, her child! was she to be separated from her beloved infant? maternal love strongly pleaded for braving the powerful enemies with whom she had to contend; yet what chance was there, did she resist, of escaping the threatened punishment? her husband—her child alike might be the victims. She promised to submit, and with an agonized heart the young and lovely Baroness was conveyed into Scotland, where a small house was ready to receive her, situated on a mountainous estate belonging to the family of the Baron St. Andrew, and where spies of Miss M'Rae, under the name of domestics, surrounded her.



CHAPTER XIII.

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DURING these transactions, Lord St. Andrews suffered under apprehensions the most terrible. Alicia was, he feared, ill—she was dead—or no longer loved him.—The Earl, whose anger was kept alive by M'Rae, also directed his vengeance, and obliged Mr. Barlow to quit his farm.

At the period when Lord St. Andrews first arrived at Llanmorden, Miss Barlow had secretly married a young Cornet of a regiment quartered in one of the neighbouring

towns. Mr. Barlow had learned he was a gay and dissipated character, and had commanded his daughter to drop the acquaintance she had commenced with him ; this she was no way inclined to do, and when Mr. Meynel proposed a private marriage, she agreed, but no sooner was the ceremony over, than he made her solemnly promise never to reveal it, till he authorized her so to do, as he was entirely dependant upon his uncle, Sir Robert Bertram, his father being supposed dead in the East Indies ; and that his friends, he feared, would not sanction his choice. My readers will easily discover, that the husband of Miss Barlow was the son of Mr. Meynel and the sister of Sir Robert Bertram, who then resided at Oakdale with Mrs. Mildred Bertram. Mr. Meynel was ordered to Ireland with his regiment, soon after which his wife gave birth to a daughter ; her brother, now Captain Barlow, with Lady St. Andrews, alone were privy to the marriage, and with them also rested the secret of her child's birth,

which remained at some little distance from Llanmorden, with a woman who had been a servant in Mr. Barlow's house some years. Three weeks after the birth of the little Meynel, the daughter of Lord St. Andrews was born, and ere that infant was six weeks old, its mother left Llanmorden. Mr. Barlow still remained a stranger to his daughter's marriage, who feared alike his displeasure and her husband's, who yet insisted upon concealment. The child of Lady St. Andrews survived her departure only a few weeks, dying in convulsions, when Mr. Barlow was absent at a neighbouring fair. With the assistance of her brother, Mrs. Meynel concealed the death of the little Eliza, and brought her own infant home; the change was not remarked by Mr. Barlow, who at that time was engrossed by his affairs being involved.—Soon after the whole family were obliged to quit Llanmorden by Miss M'Rae's arts, who, learning whither they went, still pursued them.

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Was I to trace Lord St. Andrews through all his various efforts to again recover his lost, his beloved Alicia; was I to speak of his sorrows, or relate fully the duplicity and art of Miss M'Raे, it would far exceed the limits of a modern novel; suffice it then to say, that she insidiously kept alive Lord Trewarne's dislike to the amiable and beautiful Alicia, and that for the space of eight years she succeeded in separating this unfortunate couple. Again they were restored to each other, and for a time enjoyed as perfect a share of happiness as falls to the lot of mortals; absence had not weakened their attachment, which seemed to have acquired strength from their sufferings. Llanmorden and its neighbourhood had been searched by Lord St. Andrews for the Barlows, but without success; he at last traced them into Shropshire, but from thence all his attempts were fruitless. Miss M'Raे, in the character of the enraged parent of the supposed Mr. Mackenzie, had there visited them, and demanded the child, which was refused

by Mr. Barlow, and she retired denouncing vengeance. Yet, as she revolved it in her mind, she determined to make this family her instruments, and thus at once conceal the infant heir of Lord St. Andrews, yet suffer no fear from detection ; she therefore wrote, in a feigned hand, to Mr. Barlow, announcing herself as the younger brother of Mr. Mackenzie, who had been sent abroad by his father on account of his marriage, that had utterly disengaged the noble family to which he belonged, and that he feared his brother was dead, from his not having been heard of for some time, in which case the writer, being heir to the estate, would, at his father's death, acknowledge his niece ; and entreated they would conceal her from the attempts of his mother, whose violence he feared would take her by force, and whose temper was such as to make him fear some terrible fate for the child.—Change of name and place was entreated, and this request, accompanied by a bank note of 50l. with a promise, provided they attended to the request

request made, and wrote, according to the direction given, an account of their proceedings, and the child's health, an annual sum should be remitted them. The scheme proved an effectual one. Twice had Mr. Barlow changed his name and place of residence, ere, assuming that of Wetherall, he took Woodcraft farm, and became a tenant of Sir Robert Bertram's in the pleasant vale of Oakdale; nor till after that did Miss M'Rae drop her correspondence with him.

The son of Miss M'Rae appeared to enjoy, by inheritance, those talents in which she excelled, nor had they wanted in her an able instructress; assiduously indeed did this artful woman cultivate the promising abilities of her son.—The same reason which made Miss M'Rae dislike Lord St. Andrews, subsisted, with added force, in her son, who had now reached an age when, the character beginning to consolidate, we may judge of the future bias.

Lord and Lady St. Andrews had not long been reunited, when the education of young M'Raе being finished, his mother grew very importunate with the Earl that he should make some provision for her son; but his Lordship, who submitted to the whims and caprices of a woman who had, in a manner, rendered herself necessary to his existence, yet had laid it down as a rule never to render her independent of him.

“ Pray, Madam, (said the Earl) have I ever allowed Frederick an income suitable to his birth ?”

“ My Lord, is there not a material difference between a disobedient, obstinate character, and such a young man as William ?”

“ I grant it, (replied the Earl, with a satirical tone), the difference I fully comprehend. Frederick Fitz-Harman MacKenzie is the son and heir of Mary, Baroness St. Andrews, and the Earl of Trewarne; William is the son of Miss M'Raе, and the laws of the land allow him no inheritance.”

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The lady found she had gone beyond her bounds, and attempted to speak, but was silenced by his Lordship, who proceeded :—

“ Your son has as yet been perhaps more liberally provided for than Lord St. Andrews, who, if he chose to assert his claims against me, might for some years have enjoyed the Scotch estates. With a soul so exalted, a heart so amiable, and a spirit so nobly disinterested, William will never feel a state of dependance painful if left to Lord St. Andrews’s generosity. Of this I am determined, whilst I have a son who is my legal heir, no other shall be provided for by me, independent of him; Frederick shall not inherit an estate loaded with annuities for illegitimate children. Perhaps, Miss M’Rae, I may, I think I have, sufficiently disgraced myself, and had I not had an heir to my title and estate, I should long ere now have connected myself with some woman I deemed worthy of being successor to the Countess of Trewarne.”

His Lordship quitted the room, and Miss M'Raे resolved not again to tease him on this subject, lest he might be irritated so as to deprive her of what was settled on herself, but done so as to be reviseable at his Lordship's pleasure. Soon after this determination was made by Miss M'Raे, she had the mortification of learning Lady St. Andrews was expected, ere long, to give her Lord another heir. Unpleasant as this intelligence was, Miss M'Raे resolved to conceal her vexation, and finding the Earl was determined to leave her son dependant on Lord St. Andrews, hoped to secure his regard, by using her influence at this time to restore him to his father; and having fully effected this, she made William the bearer of the tidings to his brother. Cordially, ere his errand was announced, was he received by the amiable couple, who yet inhabited the small house assigned Lady St. Andrews some years before.

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The pleasing manner, the appearance of sensibility, of frankness, young M'Rae so well knew how and when to assume, soon won the esteem of his amiable relatives, and the few days preceding their quitting Summer Shiel's for London, was spent in the utmost harmony. On the parts of Lord and Lady St. Andrews all was unreserved confidence ; if they spoke of the loss of their infant daughter, of their efforts to regain her, M'Rae wept with them, and if they talked of their future happy prospects, his countenance was lighted by joy, and his eyes beamed with hope. Miss M'Rae's kindness to his Lordship in his childhood and in his boyish years was remembered with gratitude ; she concealed her faults, and he thought but of those virtues she displayed. Deeply did Lord St. Andrews lament his father's conduct towards her, and grieved that a brother so amiable should be deprived of those advantages which, as son to the Countess of Trewarne, would have been his.

They set out for London, and had teached Carlisle, when an express met them, hastening their journey—Lord Trewarne was supposed to be dying. They had dined at Carlisle, and being nearly dark, Lord St. Andrews meant to have gone no farther that night, but on receiving this intelligence, instantly set out, and had crossed Cumberland, when driving along a road which had been lately repaired with large stones, the carriage, in which was Lord and Lady St. Andrews, with M'Rae, was overturned, but little damaged, nor any person huit.— They soon were able to continue their journey, but had not travelled many miles, when her Ladyship declared she was ill, and utterly unable to proceed. Appleby was the nearest town, and Lady St. Andrews said she hoped to support herself till they reached it; a small cottage was seen rising from amidst the surrounding heath, at some little distance from the road, and her Ladyship growing worse, she begged to be taken thither. Just as they were turning the

chaise to comply with this request, a servant of Lord Trewarne's came up, who put a letter into the hands of M'Rae, which, when he had glanced his eye over it, he gave to Lord St. Andrews ; it was written by Miss M'Rae, who conjured her son to hasten his journey, as the Earl was not expected to live, and that he was anxious to behold Lord and Lady St. Andrews, declaring he could not die in peace without their forgiveness. Her Ladyship entreated she might be left—she would perhaps be better soon, and follow them. As Lord St. Andrews's presence seemed more necessary in London than M'Rae's, who offered to stay with her Ladyship, this plan was adopted, and reluctantly the fond couple parted.

With Lady St. Andrews remained a woman, who had been one of the people set over her by Miss M'Rae ; Lord St. Andrews's servant had been dispatched to Appleby for assistance, but ere he returned, her Ladyship had given birth to a fine boy. M'Rae had

already bribed the woman of the cottage, who, in conjunction with Morris, her Ladyship's attendant, informed her the infant was dead (a circumstance which the late overturn rendered probable); wrapped in flannel, the infant was given to M'Rae, who waited without, and by him concealed in a wheat-stack at the back of the cottage.— The man returning from Appleby was immediately dispatched with the news of Lady St. Andrews's situation after her Lord, and thus were left entirely in the power of M'Rae both child and mother.

## CHAPTER XIV.

NO sooner was he relieved from the enquiries of the person who came from Appleby to attend her Ladyship, regarding the body of the infant, than dressing himself in an old hat and wig, and wrapped in a great coat, with the child in a basket, he set out on horseback, as yet undetermined what way to provide for the innocent infant. A few miles from Temple Sowerby, near the foot of the mountain called Cross Fell, he met a woman who carried a basket with laces, and sundry other wares on one arm, whilst

the other brandished a stout oaken cudgel ; a chubby faced boy was fastened on her back, and she appeared in a likely way soon to have an infant in her arms. This Amazonian, M'Rae, as he surveyed her, judged a fit nurse for the heir of the title and estates of the Earl of Trewarne. The bargain was soon concluded for a sum which was an hundred times more than the lady had ever at one time possessed ; she promised to adopt the infant, and M'Rae assured her of the same sum, provided she, the same day of the following year, appeared with the child at the same place. He then enquired where she was going, and she informed him to Cockermouth, if she was able, where she expected to meet the next week with some of her comrades, for that Johnny and she had quarrelled at Reeth, about which neighbourhood he generally travelled with his tinker's budget, and she had come away and left him. Having thus disposed of the infant, M'Rae returned to the cottage where he had left Lady St. Andrews, who

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in a few days had a letter from her Lord, tenderly regretting his separation from her, but that at present he could not leave his father, whose life was yet despaired of.

As soon as it was judged safe for Lady St. Andrews, she set out, and by easy stages reached London, where she found the Earl, though better, yet in a very doubtful state. Nothing during this period could exceed the attention of M'Rae, or the tenderness of his mother. The Earl's disorder seemed now to quit him, and in a state of convalescence, he was ordered by the physicians into the country; at this time did Lord St. Andrews urge his father, if Miss M'Rae was necessary to his happiness, no longer to allow her to remain under the stigma her character had so long borne, but to marry her.—This Lord Trewarne positively refused.

“ No, (said he) Frederick, Miss M'Rae's arts are now visible to me; she has lost her influ-

influence, and is no longer necessary to my comfort.—You tell me it is a just and a too late reparation—I tell you, Lord St. Andrews, she is, she ever was, unworthy of the place of your mother.—Miss M'Raee is the sacrifice not of my artifice, but of her own vanity.”

In pursuance to the Earl's present sentiments, Miss M'Raee left the house of his Lordship, with an allowance which he said was sufficient for all reasonable and some unreasonable expences.

Lord and Lady St. Andrews, whom the Earl of Trewarne could scarcely bear a moment out of his sight, were now domesticated under his roof. The following autumn brought a return of the Earl's complaints, and a warmer climate was recommended, and he went upon the Continent, accompanied by Lord St. Andrews and his Lady. M'Raee was also, by their desire, of the party, to which his pleasing manners made him a desirable

desirable addition. The Earl's temper was broke by his illness, and his spirits sunk as he reflected on the harshness of his treatment of his amiable son, and the deserving object of that son's choice, and the consequent loss of their first-born child ; nor could the Earl look back on his life in a way that could yield him any great satisfaction. Weary of a fruitless search after health abroad, his Lordship returned to England, where a few months finished the period of his existence. M'Rae was left, as his mother had reason to suppose he would be, entirely dependant on his brother, who instantly made a provision for him, which M'Rae accepted, on condition he might in some degree earn it, by being made useful. Lord Trevarne insisted, yet M'Rae steadily refused :—“ It was not (said he) the Earl's intention I should be rendered independent ; allow me but to hold the place now vacant of your chief agent, the trouble in this station will be nominal ; yet, by evincing my care for your interest, shall I prove my gratitude—I shall yet be

be in some degree dependant, and my father's will by this means will be obeyed. Lord Trewarne consented, and M'Rae gained a point he considered of more importance than the annuity, which, liberal as it was, he deemed far beneath his merit. The Earl now made a will, in which he constituted M'Rae his executor, and left Lady Trewarne and her children heir to all he could bequeath. At Florence her Ladyship had given birth to a daughter, whose infant beauty and sweetnes promised all her fond parents could wish, and a few weeks preceding the death of the Earl she was mother to a lovely boy. The young Alicia was attacked by a malignant and infectious disorder, which was caught by her mother, who attended on her, nor did the infant boy escape—all three fell a sacrifice to its fury.

I will not attempt to describe the father's, the husband's feelings; passionately attached to a woman every way amiable—endeared too by mutual sufferings—possessed of a heart

heart whose warmth and sensibility were rare—of a character that bordered on enthusiasm—Lord Trevarne saw himself, by these misfortunes, cut off from all hope of happiness, deprived of consolation; no one child remained whose features, whose virtues might recal to him his lost Alicia. He would listen to no offer of comfort—he sorrowed as them that have no hope—and shut himself up with the body of his beloved Lady, and her little son.

Between Sir Robert Bertram and the Earl a friendship had subsisted since they were boys, (originating from the late Earl of Trevarne, with the Earl of Knaresborough being, under Lady Bertram's will, her son's trustees.) Sir Robert learned his friend's distress, and in vain entreated for admittance; the door was at length broke open by the Baronet, and the Earl forcibly taken from this scene of death. The infection displayed itself in him, but accompanied by a fever in the brain; to the care of Sir Robert was, perhaps,

haps, the Earl indebted for a life he would willingly have laid down ; Reason seemed to sit loosely on her throne—at times he was furious, if opposed—at others sunk in melancholy.—M'Rae was, at Lady Trewarne's death, in Scotland, but hastened into Hertfordshire, where the Earl was, when he learned his situation, and with all the delicacy of attention he knew so well how to display, endeavoured to give his ideas an happier turn. Change of scene, and travelling, were prescribed, to which at length, urged by his friend's importunities, his Lordship gave a slow consent. Lord Morville, now the Earl of Knaresborough, accompanied him, with M'Rae, into France, which they intended crossing, and thus pursuing their route into Switzerland, where the Earl never having been, the country would be perfectly unconnected with any former recollections. The second night Lord Morville pressed his friend to drink more than was his usual custom, as he appeared extremely low ; his spirits changed as he drank the last glass of wine,

wine, and an air of wildness took its place. Lord Morville proposed retiring, and the Earl, pouring out a bumper of brandy, drank it off ere he was observed. Frenzy succeeded, and he was for some days obliged to be held in bed ; from this he in part recovered, and on the third night he was left by Lord Morville to the care of his servants. (M'Rae being indisposed, had also gone to bed.) Wearyed by want of rest, the attendants slept ; the Earl rose, dressed, and leaping out of a window, ran with all his speed till he met an empty carriage ; heedless which way he went, he gave money to the driver, who conveyed him to a post town, from whence procuring a chaise, he again set out. When next he changed horses, he wrote to Lord Morville as follows :

It is you, my friend, you who was once so dear to me, that I fly ; once I esteemed you—once your friendship was my solace in sorrow—now it is irksome ! Return, Morville, to the amiable woman you love—to  
your

your children—abandon not such interesting objects for him to whom all nature is a blank ! heed not my wanderings—yet I may become collected ;—till then I fly you—I fly all that were ever known or loved by me—that yet remains to the wretched Tre-warne !”

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## CHAPTER XV.

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THE Earl was pursued, but so varied was his route, so desultory his road, that the pursuit was fruitless. At a small village on the Dutch coast he hired a fishing vessel, from which he was landed at Yarmouth ; from thence he set out on foot, but

but in no certain way did he proceed ; various conveyances were made use of, but he stopped at no town, and avoided such places as he judged probable he might be known at. He made a pilgrimage to Llammorden—he visited in secret every well-remembered spot consecrated in his memory to his lamented Alicia, and again set out on foot ; at Chester he, however, again took a chaise, and drove with all expedition into Westmoreland to visit the cottage where Lady St. Andrews was obliged to stop on her journey. The cottage was gone, but in its stead had risen a decent farm house, surrounded by new inclosures. Leaving his carriage he walked thither, and learned a fire had consumed the cottage, (the work of M'Rae the morning of his departure) and its then inhabitant did not long survive her fright. The gentle deportment of the stranger interested the good woman of the house to offer him a bed, as it was nearly dark, and no house near ; the hospitable offer was accepted, as was the oatcake and milk

milk she set before him ; the Earl slept, and awoke with more composure than he had long done. After breakfasting, he left gold on the table, and took his departure, with an intention of pursuing his way to Summer Shiels, so long the residence of Alicia ; but heedless of his steps, he wandered on in the road he first chanced to take, till upon enquiry he found he had reached the little town of Brough ; yet still he proceeded, leaving Westmoreland, and entering Durham, at the first town of which county he procured a chaise, in which he proceeded till he was about a mile from Oakdale, when, to the surprise of the postillion, in the midst of a heavy shower of snow he discharged him, and went forward on foot. Already do my readers know the Earl reached St. Mary's at the time of old Joshua Wetherall's, alias Mr. Barlow, interment, who it seems had intended revealing to Mr. Hammond the secret regarding Eliza, had he lived another day.

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I need not again repeat the particulars of the marriage, except to beg my readers to recollect Mr. Bouchier (which name he assumed as being that of his Alicia) absented himself on his wedding-day, and that he did not return for the space of several succeeding ones. He had learned M'Rae was in Scotland, and thither he went, but in a disguise that prevented his being known by any but his brother, whom he caused to swear he would conceal this visit, saying he was living in retirement, and informed him in what way he meant to draw upon him for money ; and as he even did not trust M'Rae with the secret of his retreat, the method he took was such as even to elude all the enquiries of that artful wretch.

Already has it been related how Mr. Bouchier came to the knowledge of the way into the concealed chambers, where, by comparing the account given by Mr. Barlow, with that in Mildred's confession, he found them precisely the same. Every article of her

wardrobe, her height, her features, and apparent age had been minuted down, alike by Mr. Barlow and Mildred Bertram; all corresponded, and all convinced the Earl that the daughter of the unfortunate son of Sir Robert Bertram and Eliza Bouchier was the same person. When he entered the apartment where Eliza was, he found her busied in arranging some linen in an old trunk. "Look (said she) Mr. Bouchier, at this trunk; I have heard my grandfather say it was my mother's, whom I cannot remember; and when I have asked my grandfather after my father and mother, he would never give me any information, except that they were both dead, he believed; was it not very odd, Mr. Bouchier, he did not know? The very day, poor man! before he died, I was asking if my mother was very young when she was married, and where I was born, when he burst into tears, and said he was going the next day to speak to Mr. Hammond, and then I should know all he could tell me."

"It

“ It is, indeed, (said the Earl) strange ; it seems very odd your grandfather should wish to conceal such things from you, Eliza.”

“ Oh ! here are some letters, Mr. Bouchier ! I was about to read them when you came, but the ink is quite faded ; I dare say they have been written many, many years ago ; the writer perhaps has long been dead.”

The Earl took the letter ; it was addressed to Mrs. Mackenzie, at Mr. Barlow’s, Llannmorden, Glamorganshire. He stood with the letter tightly clasped in his hands, with his eyes fixed on Eliza, where they remained unmoved ; his face was bloodless, and wildly he bade her leave him. During the first weeks of her marriage, Eliza had frequently received a like command from her husband, when he found himself unable to repress the extravagance of his manner, but which had not occurred for some months. Eliza, hesitatingly, enquired if he was well.

“ Go, Eliza, leave me ! I am well—I am not sick ! Go ! I entreat—leave me !”

Terrified, she obeyed, and the Earl, fastening the door, examined the letters, and found a sad confirmation of his suspicions.— Three of his letters, all wrote between leaving Llanmorden, and reaching Trewarne House, remained to convince him that Eliza, the child he had supposed entirely lost, was found at St. Mary's Oak ; alas ! how found ! — Several trifles given by him to Alicia were also contained in this trunk. The distraction of mind he sustained has been already mentioned, yet notwithstanding this he instantly resolved to conceal from the amiable and innocent Eliza, the sad knowledge of her birth, and put the letters in his pocket ; yet others remained which were addressed to Miss Barlow, and written by a person of the name of Meynel, who called her wife. The last he read was from Mrs. Meynel herself, and dated New York ; it was addressed to Mr. Wetherall, St. Mary's Oak, Durham, saying, she and her husband had arrived safely in America ; it also contained a promise of writing to him again when they were settled,

settled, and hoped they would have it in their power to take Eliza, but begged he would not mention, to her or any one, where his daughter was, or speak of Eliza's birth. This letter had been written not many months preceding Mr. Barlow's death. As the Earl again perused it, a ray of hope glanced over his mind.—Miss Barlow had been secretly married when he first went to Llanmorden; Eliza might therefore be her daughter, and not Alicia's. Mrs. Meynel it was plain alluded to some secret regarding her, and sure had his child lived that was born at Llanmorden, the large rewards he had offered for its discovery would have urged Mr. Barlow, (had no motive of humanity,) to produce her. Those rewards had, by Miss M'Rae, been represented as lures held out by the parents of Mr. Mackenzie, to get the child into their power.

In a state of mind that bordered on distraction, Lord Trewarne, as may be remembered, shut himself into Sir Philip's chamber.

ber. Afraid to again behold Eliza, and impatient of delay, he resolved to go himself to America to search for Mrs. Meynel, who alone he supposed could ascertain the truth—alone inform him of the birth of Eliza.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

MR. Hammond, my readers will recollect, was, by Lord Trewarne, presented to a living of considerable value in his gift; and it may be enquired how it happened that this circumstance did not discover the Earl's retreat. The order for the presentation was by him dated from Amiens in Picardy, to which place from Dover (where he went and returned

returned in the space of five days) did the Earl send purposely a messenger, leaving a reward to be paid on his return by the master of one of the inns, who had lately begun there, and was a stranger to his Lordship's person.—M'Rae, as the Earl's agent, took the proper steps, and Mr. Hammond was inducted into a living which he did not long enjoy ; if he had, his patron would in course of time have been discovered, and Mr. Bouchier known as the Earl of Trewarne—a circumstance not regarded by his Lordship, who had intended, upon Sir Robert Bertram's coming down to Malieveren in May, to have taken Eliza there, and to the Baronet and his Lady have announced her as Countess of Trewarne.

Amidst the wildness, the distraction which seized Lord Trewarne at the fatal discovery he had made, he thought of providing for Eliza, and had, previous to his quitting Oakdale by the passage through the concealed chambers into the garden, wrote

to M'Rae to deposit a certain sum in the bank of Newcastle for the use of Mrs. Bouchier, which letter his Lordship put in at the Liverpool post-office, previous to his embarking for America; but being directed to Kilmraigie Castle, which M'Rae had left, it had by some means been mislaid, and put up amongst some old papers. From New York again the Earl wrote, repeating the order for Mrs. Bouchier, but the ship which should have brought over the letter, was lost upon the passage. Subsequent letters were, however, received by M'Rae, each of which begged he would be careful to regularly place the money for Mrs. Bouchier in the Bank as directed. At New York the Earl learned Mr. and Mrs. Meynel had quitted it for Philadelphia; thither he went, and found they had made no sojourning there, but was supposed to have gone to Williamsburg; from thence he traced them to Elizabeth Town in New Jersey, but his wanderings yet were not at an end; those he sought had set out from thence to take up their abode

abode on a new plantation in the back settlements. Procuring a guide thither, did the Earl resolve to follow; ere the journey was accomplished, the guide fell sick, and was unable to proceed, and his Lordship, with that impatience which he had contracted from the malady which sickness and extreme grief had caused, would not wait the recovery of his guide, but taking in his stead a person he met with at the plantation where he had been obliged to stop, proceeded. After travelling through woods almost impenetrable, and taking a journey of much greater length than the Earl supposed he had to go, he began to find his new guide unequal to the task he had undertaken. Their provisions already were expended, the two last days they had subsisted upon the casual support of their fire arms; no cultivated ground was to be seen from the eminences, or any signs of inhabitants;—at length the man declared he knew not which way to proceed, that he had been afraid of meeting with a party of Indians, who having once had him

in their possession, would treat him barbarously did they again find him ; on this account he had deviated from the road, and now he was at a loss how to regain it, or any place he knew. At last they reached the banks of a large body of water, nearly perished ; they advanced along its banks in hopes of falling in with some tribe of Indians to succour them, nor had they kept on their way long when a party of armed savages approached and surrounded them. The guide of Lord Trewarne was known by some of the Indians, who had been the preceding season with a tribe of their friends who dwelt beyond the Ohio ; with this tribe had Green incorporated himself, and after having married one of them, deserted to the white people. Lord Trewarne was, with his faithless guide, made a prisoner ; in vain did his Lordship assure them, by means of the Indian who acted as interpreter, the nation of their brethren on the Ohio were equally unknown to him—vainly assured them he was a stranger to Green, who acted only as his guide, and

and had led him astray. They believed not his assertions, nor would they listen to the offers he made of liberally rewarding them, if they would allow him to accompany them to Montreal, whither they were going with furs; but declared he should, with his companion, the traitor Green, be, on their return, delivered up to their brethren who dwelt on the Ohio, with whom, the preceding hunting season, they had smoked the calumet of peace; but that did they then find he was a true man, he should be conducted to his friends the white people. The traders set out on their journey, leaving Lord Trewarne and Green in charge of a tribe on the banks of the lake.

The unfortunate Earl grew into favour with his savage hosts, and by degrees found their food and way of life less disgusting, and amidst the wild scenes by which he was surrounded, he once more recovered a settled state of mind. No longer the hasty impetuous character he had appeared to all who

had seen him in America, Lord Trewarne was now calm as in his early years, before he lost his beloved Alicia ; gentle and forbearing — patient under misfortunes — yet watchful to avoid them. Deeply did he regret the want of resignation he had displayed to the dispensations of Providence, who now perhaps thought fit to chastise his impatience, by placing him in a situation that was well calculated to make him sensible of his error, amongst a nation of unlettered barbarians, whose natural indolence of character was seldom roused, save by passions that disgrace human nature ; revenge of injuries made them forget all fatigues to accomplish their purposed aim. The Earl was often sadly occupied with retrospective views of his conduct ; he had, instead of looking beyond the grave for comfort, on the loss of his wife and children, abandoned himself to his griefs, which he took every method of nourishing. Without reflection, further than that the features of Eliza recalled, as did her age and manner, to him his Alicia,

did

did he enter into a connection with her that death alone could dissolve ; yet, more fortunate in some respects than he merited, her amiable temper, her many engaging qualities restored him to peace ; but when he found she was in all probability the daughter of Alicia, whom she resembled, he had broke out into his former impatience, and the woman, who as wife or daughter he was alike bound to protect, he had left to sorrow, if not to infamy. Uncertain of his fate, her gentle spirit would sink before her unmerited misfortunes. If indeed she was the daughter so long lost, yet the crime was an involuntary one, and he who sees the heart, would not judge by the transgression.

It was nearly the same time the following year ere the traders returned, when taking leave of their friends, they set out with their prisoners ; upon their march they encountered an hostile tribe, and a fierce battle ensued. On each side more were killed than survived — of the former number was Green ; the party which

which had made him and Lord Trewarne prisoners became so in their turns to their enemies, who with his Lordship, whose masters were changed by the fortune of war, set out for their homes. The course they took was west north west for some months, when at length they reached their habitations. Lord Trewarne was presented to the Chiefs of the nation, with high eulogiums on his valour and perseverance under fatigue and danger; for various had been the encounters they had met with on their march. Adopted in the room of a famous warrior slain in this expedition, his Lordship received his name, and was judged worthy of the rank he held. Hitherto no opportunity of escape had offered, and now, when thus entrusted, to attempt it would be instant death; nor had the Earl a wish to prolong his life upon the conditions he now held it, had not a hope still flattered him some future period might put it in his power to leave his savage friends, and return to England.

During

During this interval, it is necessary I should present my readers with some account of M'Rae, who, as before observed, did not receive either of the letters first written by the Earl, in both which a particular direction was contained regarding the money to be deposited for the use of Mrs. Bouchier in the Bank at Newcastle, which, had he received, of course he could not have avoided complying with. Three years had passed away since Lord Trewarne had quitted Lord Morville in France; during that period (except to M'Rae) he had not appeared, and the next heir to the title and estates of the Mackenzies, Lord St. Andrews, asserting his Lordship was dead, put in his claim.—M'Rae now stepped forward, and produced letters from his brother; the order for inducing Mr. Hammond, dated Amiens, into the rectory of St. Catherine, with different papers signed by his name, all proving his being alive within the last eighteen months. After this period M'Rae had recourse to a branch of his education which

he had carefully studied, and arrived at uncommon proficiency in the art of forgery ; for there were few hands indeed that he was acquainted with, that he could not copy in a way which would puzzle the writers themselves ; but this accomplishment, with a diffidence not natural to him, was most assiduously concealed. This acquirement served at this time to satisfy the claimants of the St. Andrews estate that the Earl of Trewarne was alive in America not two months ago, and thus M'Raे remained possessed, in his Lordship's name, of his whole property ; but he feared he would not long remain undisturbed, as Mr. Mackenzie was a man of an active temper, and he feared, was there any truth in the report of the Earl's death, he would not rest till he had proved it. M'Raе found means to satisfy himself, and learned that a person had come from America, who had known the Earl in England ; that he had seen him at Elizabeth Town, where reports had come, just as he left it, of the Earl being, it was supposed, murdered

murdered by his guide, a fellow of notorious character ; as it was known he had a considerable sum of money when at Gunter's Farm he left the sick guide recommended to him, and set out with Green.

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### CHAPTER XVII.

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MR. Mackenzie now talked of going himself to America to enquire into the truth of the story, when death relieved M'Rae from his fears, as after Mr. Mackenzie his mother was next heir ; but to her succeeded a family to whom she bore an inveterate hatred, as since her connexion with the Earl of

Tre-

Trewarne, though nearly allied, they had totally renounced her. To find means to secure those estates to her son, which his illegitimacy prevented his inheriting, employed the sleeping and waking thoughts of Miss M'Rae ; at length she disclosed to him what at first appeared a desperate scheme, but the event proved it for a time a successful one. M'Rae fell sick ; physicians were called in, who were at a loss how to prescribe for a person who laboured under such a complication of disorders ; their skill was exerted, but it seemed without effect, for their patient departed, whilst his mother, and his own footman Dodds, sat by him. The Castle of Kilcraigie was at this time the residence of M'Rae, and it was filled with the lamentations of his disconsolate mother and the faithful Dodds ; the dead body of their master was seen by all the servants, after which his mother shut herself up in the chamber, nor would allow any one to approach but Dodds, till the day of the funeral, when Mr. M'Rae's coffin was laid in the

the family vault of the Lord St. Andrews, close by the last Baron. Pompous paragraphs, that spoke of the virtues and accomplishments of Mr. M'Raे, and the infinite loss his sorrowing friends had sustained by his death, were sent to every paper in London and Edinburgh. Meanwhile the living M'Raē set out on a horse procured by Dodds for Greenock, where he embarked in a ship bound to Virginia, from whence on his arrival he went to Elizabeth Town in New Jersey, where he saw the person who had gone from thence as guide with the Earl, of whose fate no doubt remained with all that heard the story, and knew the character of Green.

In America the Earl had been known as Mr. Mackenzie, a circumstance to which M'Raē was no stranger, from his letters.— Setting out on his return, M'Raē dyed his hair and eyebrows with a certain mixture, which changed them to nearly the same shade of brown as Lord Trewarne's, to whom, excepting

excepting the colour of his hair, he has already been said so uncommonly to resemble. A little change was also made in his complexion, which done, he had only to endeavour at his brother's countenance, (the one he already wore was assumed); he had only to change it for one more interesting, and yet farther from his real character. Reaching New York, he wrote in the Earl's hand and name to himself at Kilcraigie, desiring he would order the house in London to be ready for his reception, and meet him there on his arrival, as he was about to embark for England. He then gave a long detail of adventures, not so wide of truth as the inventor imagined, for he spoke of being taken prisoner, after losing his way in the woods, by the Indians, from whom he had at length escaped. Those marvellous adventures were repeated in letters to Sir Robert Bertiam, the Earl of Knasborough, and other less intimate friends of Lord Tre-warne. By these friends was M'Raé met on his return to England; all saw his Lord-  
ship

ship was considerably altered, yet how no one could say ; he was not so handsome, yet he appeared rather to have grown younger than older ; his manner was much the same, but his voice Sir Robert thought was not so pleasant. M'Rae had undoubtedly as much assurance as any man can reasonably hope to possess ; yet he felt disconcerted by the scrutinizing eye of the Earl of Knaresborough, and the hesitating doubting manner of Sir Robert Bertram, from whose observation he meant to withdraw himself, but was visited the following day by Sir Robert, who then was convinced that if this was his friend Lord Trewarne, he must have, by his misfortunes, been deprived of his memory ; but that if this person was an impostor, he was one intimately connected with his Lordship, and so completely in possession of the family affairs, that it would be almost impossible to convict him. Sir Robert saw on this visit Miss M'Rae, who came to congratulate his Lordship on his return ; nothing could exceed the acting of this lady and her

accomplished

accomplished son, who wept with her the death of his brother, Mr. M'Rae ; and at parting Miss M'Rae promised his Lordship to comply with his invitation, and make him a visit at Trewarne House, whither M'Rae went the following day, declaring to the friends of Lord Trewarne he would no more mingle in the gay world.

A person, formerly a tenant upon the St. Andrews estate, had gone out to America in the same ship as M'Rae ; but not finding the prospects which induced him to quit Scotland likely to answer, he returned to England. A sister of this man's lived in Sir Robert Bertram's family ; to her, at his arrival in London, he mentioned Mr. M'Rae, of Kilcraigie, going out in the same ship ; she laughed at the supposition, as M'Rae was dead before that time. To her lady, as she was dressing her, Mrs. Bailey mentioned her brother's disappointment and return, and what he had said regarding M'Rae. Sir Robert Bertram, as well as the

the Earl of Knaresborough, now concluded that the impostor (for such they were inwardly convinced was the pretended Lord Trewarne) was no other than his brother ; and Mr. Fitz-Harman, the next heir to the title and estate of the Earl of Trewarne, (the Earl failing his issue), was urged by Sir Robert to assert his claim, and offered any sum of money that might be wanted to carry on the suit, should the impostor persist.

The suit was commenced ; M'Raee, skilled in all the doublings of the law, traversed it, but at length, after some delay, this important cause was brought before the House of Lords, Miss M'Raee at the same time asserting her claim to the title and estate of St. Andrews, which, if the present possessor proved an impostor, was her right. A material, and almost the only evidence the plaintiff had to produce, was dead ; this was Bailey, who, wearied of waiting till he was wanted to give evidence, went down into Scotland, where it was known Miss

M'Raee

M'Rae had conversed with him, and a few hours after he was seized extremely ill, and died, as Sir Robert did not hesitate to believe, of poison; but this was but a supposition, founded upon the idea, that a person who once steps from the path of rectitude, will stop at nothing to gain his ends or conceal his crimes. The Captain of the ship was ready to swear Bailey had told him the passenger that never came out of the cabin was M'Rae; and Sir Robert Bertram and the Earl of Knaresborough would give their joint affidavits, that they believed the person who called himself Earl of Trewarne was an impostor. Thus slightly furnished with evidence, or proof, was the plaintiff when the cause came before the House.

Miss M'Rae, yet in mourning, appeared to enforce her claim as Baroness St. Andrews, and Mr. Fitz-Harman, attended by the Earl of Knaresborough and Sir Robert Bertram, to prove the present possessor of the Earl of Trewarne's estates an impostor, and to pray for restitution to the heir.

M'Rae,

M'Rae, who in eloquence was not surpassed by many of the members of that assembly amongst whom he wished to be ranked, assisted in pleading his own cause, and in a most pathetic speech spoke of his early misfortunes—of the deprivation of all comfort. “ I sustained in America hardships almost unparalleled (said he), and on my return to my native country, I determined for ever to abjure the gay, the busy world, and in retirement seek repose, where, cheered by the society, at times, of a few chosen friends, I would strive at forgetfulness of the painful past, and look forward to the period, when beyond the grave I should be re-united to those who are hid by death from my sight. I am dragged from my retreat—I am exposed to assertions the most vile ; my very existence is denied ; the most scandalous stories are circulated ; my name fills every public print ; and whilst I would shrink from society, and am unfitted by my late malady for exertion, I am called forth

as an object of general observation ; I am compelled to assert my own cause, or sink under obloquy, and be deemed by the world an usurper of rights which my birth entitled me to, and which could not, would not have been disputed, but for the man who was once most dear to my heart, every secret of which has been laid open to him. Yes, my Lords, such and so valued was he, who now points a dagger to my breast (all eyes fell upon Sir Robert Bertram), who not satisfied with supporting the gentleman in his claims, who at my decease will peaceably inherit my estates, has even dared to violate, with sacriligeous hands, the ashes of the dead. My father's son, a man infinitely dear to me, whose body was peaceably interred with his ancestors, was not suffered to rest in quiet ; but, by the emissaries of him I so lately esteemed, was the coffin broke open."— The feelings of the speaker prevented his proceeding, and Miss M'Rae fell into hysterics.

Sir

Sir Robert had caused the inspection mentioned to be made, but after so long an interval, nothing further could be ascertained than that the coffin had doubtless contained the body of some person.

The counsel for the plaintiff then spoke, and such proofs as could be procured were produced, to prove the person, who called himself Earl of Trewarne, an impostor.—The Captain of the ship swore to what Bailey had said, and declared that, except the wig which he saw the person wear, instead of his red hair, he appeared to him the very same man that Bailey had said was Mr. M'Rae, though he went on board the ship by the name of Graham. To confront this evidence, it was proved the hair of the defendant was growing on his head, and that he wore no wig, and evidence was called, that spoke of Bailey as a man of unsettled character, and given to a practice of lying.

The circumstances, that by the Earl of Knaresborough and Sir Robert Bertram were adduced as proofs of the defendant being not Lord Trewarne, were, by his counsel, imputed to a loss of memory, caused by a derangement of intellect, under which witnesses were called to prove his Lordship had suffered. Letters were produced, and swore to by different people as his hand-writing, which traced him, further corroborated by witness, from town to town in America, till his disappearance at Elizabeth Town in New Jersey; nor were there letters wanting, written at New York, mentioning his Lordship's (alias M'Rae's) return to England.

The counsel for Mr. Fitz-Harman now mentioned certain marks being on the person of the real Earl of Trewarne, which, could they be found on the defendant, would identify him.

“ How easy (cried M'Rae) is the truth proved! declare by sufficient evidence in what

what those marks consist." A pause, and a kind of bustle ensued, when an old woman of respectable appearance stepped forward, and looked very attentively at his supposed Lordship, who asked her, in a tone of much gentleness, if she did not know him?— "Has, (said he) Mrs. Evans, years and misfortunes so changed me, that you no longer recollect the man who owes to your fostering care numberless obligations in his infant days?"

The face (said she, taking off her spectacles, and wiping her eyes) the face is that of my dear Lord, but—but the voice is not so sweet; my Lord too, (looking again at him) yes, my Lord was handsomer."

" You do not well know (said the defendant's counsellor), Mrs. Evans, whether to follow your own opinion, or your instructions. But it is you, I understand, who are (in concert with the person who lived some years ago as his Lordship's valet) to declare what are the identifying marks."

“ On the top of the right shoulder (said Mrs. Evans) is a red mark, as large as the palm of my hand, with which my Lord was born.” The valet next deposed, that six years ago this mark retained the same appearance.

“ Does no other mark, that may prove my identity, exist,” enquired M‘Rae.

A person now advanced, who appeared a foreigner, to whom the defendant bowed.—“ You, Signior Galeano, have had the trouble (said M‘Rae) of coming from Messina to prove my wounds ?”

“ I have,” answered the Signior, in Italian, a language Lord Trevarne spoke with fluency, but which M‘Rae, though he understood, could not converse in.

“ It is (said M‘Rae, in French) so long since I was in Italy, that I feel myself at a loss for words. You, Signior, I recollect, spoke French—will you be pleased to converse in that language ?”

“ I can also (said the Signior) speak a little English, and if you are the Lord I cured

cured at Messina, in the year 17—, of a wound received from some banditti near the foot of Mount Etna, there remains the cicatrice of a wound, which reaches from the shoulder of the right arm to nearly the elbow, below which, across the arm, it is again seen."

" I thank you, Signior, for the cure you at that time performed, and again for your accuracy. To this point I apprehend you, Hillier, (continued M'Rae, turning to the late valet of Lord Trewarne) have also to speak."

This man's deposition being also taken, the successful impostor retired to undergo the necessary examination, when, to the utter astonishment of the Earl of Knaresborough and Sir Robert Bertram, the identifying marks were found. An operation, painful indeed, had been sustained by M'Rae, at Kilcraigie, who was in fact ill from the pain he endured at the time of his supposed sickness and death, at which time his prudent mother,

foreseeing such a step would banish incredulity, with the assistance of Dodds, not only counterfeited a mark she knew the Earl of Trewarne was born with, but pointed out the place to Dodds where to inflict a wound, which, though not deep, yet was, by inflammatory applications, made to bear the appearance of having been so.

After all these repeated proofs, the decision of course was in favour of M'Rae, alias the Earl of Trewarne; Mr. Fitz-Harman and his friends with difficulty escaping the mob who surrounded them on their quitting the bar of the House of Lords.

CHAPTER XVIII.

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FOR a short time M'Rae exhibited himself in the metropolis, after which he went abroad, nor returned to Britain for the space of four years, when, still afraid of detection, he spent his time chiefly at Kilcraigie, where he had a perfect seraglio of women, picked up from every nation in Europe.

It is here a natural question to occur to the mind of my readers, how it could happen a trial of such importance, in which the Earl of Knaresborough and Sir Robert Bertram

were so highly interested, should not be known to Lord and Lady Morville, which doubtless it could not ; for had Lord Tre-warne been known to them as M'Rae, he never would have been admitted on the intimate footing he was in the family. Lord Morville was at the time a little boy, and if ever the story reached his ears, he had forgot it ; as he grew up he was seldom with the Earl his father, as from school he was sent to the University, and no sooner were his studies finished, than he commenced his travels.—Lady Augusta was also educated from home, residing with the Countess of Wolverhampton. Our heroine had heard M'Rae spoken of by Sir Robert Bertram, but never Lord Tre-warne, unless as a friend regretted. It was indeed a painful subject, alike to the Earl and Baronet ; both deplored their friend's probable fate—both were inwardly still convinced he who bore the title of Lord Tre-warne was an impostor, and that M'Rae, from his perfect knowledge of many incidents of his brother's life, and of family affairs,

affairs, alone could be that impostor ; yet, their having asserted it had, for a length of time, rendered their characters to be considered in a very contemptuous light, and when the world seemed to have forgot the affair, they wished not to revive its remembrance; and except to Henry Bertram, neither Sir Robert nor the Earl had for years mentioned Lord Trewarne or M'Rae.

At Kilmraigie the specious impostor was busied in arranging, after his return from abroad, some papers, amongst which he found bundled up a letter that had never been opened ;—he knew it to be his brother's writing ; it was that which was written at Oakdale, and put into the Liverpool Post-office, containing the Earl's orders for a sum of money to be paid into the Bank of Newcastle, for the use of Mrs. Bouchier. This lady was judged to be, by M'Rae, a person with whom the Earl had formed a connexion of some kind, and he resolved to search her out, not with any view at that time of ful-

filling his brother's intentions in her favour, but to discover of what nature the connexion was between them. This was easily accomplished, as Mr. Kirby had left Mrs. Bouchier's address at the Bank, in order that the money might be remitted to her, should it hereafter be received at the Bank. Accompanied by Dodds, (who since the change of name kept no outward correspondence with him) M'Rae went to North Oak, where he learned such particulars as he wished to be informed of.

M'Rae, therefore, my readers will readily suppose, was Mr. Kirby's mysterious visitant, that caused such enquiry and consternation amongst the inhabitants of St. Mary's, who were not so far mistaken in asserting he was the devil; for though not precisely his infernal highness himself, yet sure the worthy surgeon's guest might justly be called one of his prime ministers. Mr. Kirby supposed it was Mr. Bouchier, yet, as he found him ignorant of every thing almost relating

relating to him, except that there was a child left, which child he wanted to have possession of, he determined to believe it was not Mr. Bouchier. Kirby promised, when he disclosed Mr. Bouchier's real name and connexions, and by what authority he claimed Alicia, she should be given up to his guardianship—a trust reposed in him by Mrs. Bouchier, and which nothing should tempt him to desert, if not for the child's advantage.

M'Rae finding that if he was to offer a bribe, the inflexible Kirby would spurn it, quitted him, in order to find other methods to get possession of a child who might live to overturn his schemes ; but Kirby instantly set out to inform Mrs. Dalrymple of his visiter, and both judging that if the intentions of this person had been good, he would have declared his right to Alicia, it was judged proper to conceal her from any search that might be made, by a change of name, and other precautions ; soon after which

which she was left at Mrs. Selden's, upon Mrs. Dalrymple going to Jamaica. Kirby's movements were watched for some time by Dodds, who, however, weary of the post in which his penetration was eluded, had quitted the vicinity of Oakdale, previous to the good surgeon embarking for America.— M'Rae did not stay long at Kilcraigie, but again went upon the Continent; returning to England a little before our heroine became an inmate in the family of Sir Robert Bertram. Dividing his time between Trewarne House and Kilcraigie Castle, passing through Yorkshire in a journey from one of those places of residence, a favourite horse of M'Rae's was stolen; but the offender did not long escape being taken, and was committed to York Castle. Returning some short time after, his supposed Lordship stopped all night at York, where he was visited by the wife of the man who was confined in the castle for stealing his horse; but how great was M'Rae's surprise to behold in the woman who pleaded for mercy being shewn by

by his Lordship to poor Johnny the tinker, her husband, the very wench to whom he had so many years ago committed the eldest son of his brother. Without discovering himself, he could not question Susy on the subject, but although he promised no favour to her husband, gave her money.

To his confidant Dodds, M'Rae revealed what, till then, he had been ignorant of, and this precious accomplice, in quality of the person who had given Susy the child, made enquiries concerning it. She declared, after having made many evasive answers, that finding the following year nobody to meet at Cross Fell (M'Rae was at that time abroad with his father) she supposed she would never see the man again that had given her the child, and Johnny being in prison, she was not able to support her own children and it, and so laid it down, not far from Rippon, by the road side, when Sir Robert Bertram, of Malieveren, came up with his lady in their coach, which stopping when

when they saw the child, he was taken up, and carried to Malieveren, and that he had now grown up into a fine young man.

M'Rae had long wished for an opportunity of revenging himself upon Sir Robert Bertram, but now was urged by another motive, and resolved to ruin the son of Lord Trewarne, and estrange him from his benefactors, fearing circumstances might reveal his birth, when he should be obliged to acknowledge him as his son and heir. Suspicion also again might be roused; for if, as M'Rae, he should be convicted of secreting his brother's child in such a way, might it not readily be believed he would stop at no action, however base? enquiries might be again set on foot, and he might not, as before, baffle them. The inventive genius of M'Rae formed a double scheme, at once to ruin the youth whose rights he usurped, and to render him the instrument of his malicious revenge on Sir Robert Bertram.

The lady who at this time, though she did not possess the undivided heart of M'Rae, yet was honoured with his chief regard, was by him entrusted on this occasion, as far as he judged needful, and promised, in case the scheme succeeded in which she was to act a principal part, her reward should be the title of Countess of Trewarne. This woman was highly qualified for the plot in which she engaged; born in France, of English parents, she had received her education chiefly in that country, and had, after a residence in gay scenes in England, returned again to the Continent at the death of her parents, who left her unprovided for. It was at this period she became a pensioner in the Convent of Benedictines at Cambray, and here she was seen by M'Rae, who had but little trouble in persuading her to abandon a life she had lived too long in scenes of gaiety to relish; and, seduced by a promise of marriage, she quitted the convent, where it was generally known M'Rae was an English Lord, although his exact title

title had not come to the knowledge of the Abbess, who supposed Miss Boysville married. The first thought that had occurred to M'Rae, was to set up a claim on the Bertram estates, and it was Miss Boysville, who my readers will by this time conjecture visited Sir Robert in that mysterious way, at Bertram Castle ;—this was the cause, it may also be recollected, of the Baronet's going to Oakdale, where he found yet remaining letters of his father to Mildred Bertram, which plainly shewed some elder child had existed ; yet these letters were couched in terms so strangely ambiguous, that he could gather nothing from them, except hints to alarm him. He remembered, though quite a little boy, at the death of his parents, his father having charged him never to let Oakdale to strangers ; and he also recollects he was unusually agitated, when, on the day of Lady Bertram's death, he said to him, “ I have done too much for you, my son ; I have sacrificed at the altar of ambition a child who was once most dear to me.

Such

Such an expiation as is in my power shall be made, though it covers me with eternal infamy ; but as yet you are too young to be entrusted—I am to blame to speak on this subject."

There was, after the sudden death of Sir Robert, no other will than a paper which imported Lady Bertram's children would be amply provided for. The Bertram and Oakdale estates would revert to their right heir, to whom he constituted the Earl of Knasborough and the Earl of Trewarne guardians. It had always been understood that the present Baronet was alluded to of course as the right heir ; yet now those circumstances rose to Sir Robert's mind, with what his father had said to him, and which he till then had not thought of as relating to any thing material, yet, united with the letters, served to shock and perplex him. This occasioned the earnestness and agitation of his manner at Acorn-bank when Mr. Heaviside proposed pulling down Oakdale, which Sir

Robert

Robert feared might yet contain a secret that would cover a parent's memory with infamy. Thus deeply sunk these gloomy and fearful ideas on the upright mind of Sir Robert, who trembled for the honour of a family whose characters had been for ages unsullied. M'Rae soon found, that on this pretended claim he had no ground to go upon, which, when first made, was done with less foresight than usual with this artful impostor; therefore changing the plan, and building upon the well-known dissipation of the late Lord Malieveren, William March (which was the name given by the humane Sir Robert and Lady Bertram to the child they found, who was the son of their friend) was asserted by Dodds, as the brother of Lady Malieveren, to be the heir to the title and estate of the last Baron, as his son. With this clue to the story, my readers will need little explanation from me on this subject.— The rewards offered for discovering the real birth of his nephew, alarmed M'Rae, as Susy was in possession of a part of the story

he

he by no means wished to have disclosed ; not that he had much to fear—the cottager he knew was dead, and the attendant of Lady St. Andrews at the birth of her child had, from the period of the Countess's death, remained with Miss M'Rae. Yet, careful to guard against all possible contingencies, he had the tinker released from goal, to whom he took care the reward should be known ; nor did poor Johnny know but the child left by his helpmate by the road side, was one he had the same right to as the one she retained. Susy had spent in good living, or rather good drinking, with her comrades, the money she had received from M'Rae ere she again saw her husband ; nor did the gentle Susan think she was guilty of any crime in sinking the material part of the evidence she did, and, adopting the son of the Earl of Trewarne, gain the promised reward, which Dodds had, in a very different style of dress and manner than as Mr. Ayscough, told her was the only way she could manage to obtain it, unless she could

could find the man who gave her the child, upon whom she then might, as he appeared rich, raise what contribution she pleased.— Poor Johnny was not suffered long to retain his reward ; he was retaken, tried, and sentenced to hard labour on the Thames, one of his Lordship's servants appearing as prosecutor ; for Johnny, when he stole Lord Trewarne's horse, took care also of a pair of saddle-bags, in which was contained three times the value of the sum for which he now was indicted. The sentence was, however, remitted, and a pardon granted, on condition he enlisted into a regiment on the point of embarking for one of the African forts.— On this voyage Susy accompanied him, a sum of money being sent to her husband for that purpose, under his supposed son's name, to whose interest he imagined he was obliged for the change of his sentence, otherwise he would have perhaps applied the money to a different use. The deposition stolen at York was the work of the supposed faithful James, whose principles had been undermined.

mined by the gold of M'Raे some months before.

In France Providence seemed to interfere in saving the unfortunate victim of malice, as the ship seen by Mr. Blackmore waiting off the coast, would, had not the wind prevented, have taken William on board ere succour had arrived. With the master of this vessel, which was Dutch, had M'Raे agreed, that for a certain sum a young man was to be taken by him, and left upon some unfrequented island in the Indian Ocean, upon his passage to Batavia. A story had on this occasion been invented, which, though it did not agree with probability, was swallowed by the Dutchman, richly gilded as it was. That scheme failing, another was in reserve, and the artful and insinuating Miss Boysville drew the unhappy William into the snare prepared for him, whilst Dodds gave to the French Government the intelligence which caused the arrest. Crossing over to England, no sooner had

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Lady Malieveren eluded Mr. Blackmore, than hastening to Trewarne House, she claimed, and obtained her promised reward, which M·Rae granted, yet extorted a promise of secrecy regarding it ; nor did she, notwithstanding that exaltation, refuse to assist in the deep-laid scheme carried on at York, where one of the women from Kilcraigie acted the part of William March. At this period my readers will not forget M·Rae's talent at imitation, and by counterfeiting his nephew's writing, he aided most powerfully the imposition.

CHAPTER XIX.

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WEARIED with his banishment from society, and longing for a scene better adapted for his talents, no sooner had Sir Robert Bertram quitted England, than M'Raes resolved to venture once more into that world from which he had been so long banished. The woman too, whose talents make one regret that she had not a better heart and more strict principles of rectitude, was now dead of the disappointment her hopes received when her husband still continued to refuse publicly declaring his marriage; the

cause of which was, he imagined he should, by such a decided preference, raise the envy of a woman, who, by her knowledge of certain particulars, might yet ruin him.—M'Rae sorrowed, as much as his nature would admit of, for a woman whose various pleasing accomplishments, and insinuating manners had made an impression on him beyond any other.

Already was Alicia known to the fictitious Earl by character, and he longed to see that beauty in whose praise fame had not been sparing; he saw her, and was charmed.—Our readers may now account for his suddenly quitting our heroine, when seated by her at the Dutchess of Wakefield's route, as the Earl of Knasborough advanced; nor, had his Lordship continued in town, would M'Rae have ventured to expose himself to his observation. Alicia was surrounded by spies, as James had, by his lies, got the young woman discharged who was hired by Lady Bertram to attend upon our heroine, and introduced

introduced a creature of M'Rae's, as his sister, in her place, who was the identical woman that at York had personated William. Dodds again now made his appearance; as Ayfcough he had not been seen by Alicia, and but transiently by Lord Morville;—with change of hair, dress, and complexion, he was now a German Baron, which language he spoke fluently. M'Rae, who in Britain as Earl of Trewarne, noticed not publicly Dodds, yet on the Continent (where he had of late chiefly resided) he was, under another name, his confidential friend; and thus had he gleaned a knowledge of the language and manners of almost every country in Europe. With these accomplishments, and properly instructed, Baron Kaphausen was, by the Earl of Trewarne, introduced to Lord Morville's notice. Admiring, nay loving (if in such a heart love could exist) Alicia, M'Rae resolved to marry her; thus would he disappoint Henry Bertram, and thus would Sir Robert be mortified by beholding the man he detested, united to a

person he so highly esteemed. M<sup>r</sup> Rae had resolved upon marriage, in order to prevent Mr. Fitz-Harman from inheriting the title and fortune to which he was heir, after the present possessor and family, and Miss Sleigh was fixed upon as the future Countess. The difficulty that attended the attainment of his wishes, urged M<sup>r</sup> Rae more ardently to pursue them; but I need not repeat his various schemes, which all tended to the advancement of his purpose. During this period, James, in conjunction with Lord Morville's porter (who was bribed for the purpose) intercepted all letters from France; nor was there an epistle written by any of the family, which did not equally with those that should have been received, undergo M<sup>r</sup> Rae's inspection; some were altered to suit his purpose, others destroyed;—by this means were the Earl of Knaresborough and Sir Robert Bertram kept ignorant of his intimacy in Lord Morville's family, as they were likewise how affairs stood with them in France. The letters received from Paris, which gave an account

account of William's imprisonment and re-lease, referred to others never received ; nor would these either, had not they been brought by a gentleman, who himself delivered them. Lady Augusta had been more fortunate, as she had received some letters from the Earl, that had been addressed to the Countess of Wolverhampton's.

The schemes of M'Raे were hastened in their execution by his learning William March was at liberty ; that the whole affair was suspected to have originated with himself, and that for further investigation the Earl and Baronet were about to return home. Driven to desperation, he resolved, if Alicia persisted in her refusal to marry him, to take her either to Kilarraigie, or somewhere abroad ; yet she was not suffered to be the victim of this abandoned wretch, from whom at Edinburgh she escaped, and in London was informed of the ruin of Lord Morville. James found our heroine had then gone to Malieveren ; M'Raē saw her suspicions were

so completely roused, that unless he could find means instantly to allay them, the Bertrams would reach England, and all the schemes that he had, with such waste of ingenuity and money, laboured to establish, would be overthrown, and himself openly exposed to detection; for Dodds he was satisfied had deserted him in revenge, for the attempt he made upon his life near Kelso.

The pompous funeral answered the end; Alicia again was thrown off her guard, but M'Rae, deprived of the ready intelligence which James and Ann had conveyed, our heroine had accomplished the whole of her journey ere M'Rae knew she had quitted Malieveren: but he found no difficulty in tracing her to St. Mary's Oak; he had himself once slept a night at Oakdale.—My readers may, perhaps, remember, that a person who expressed a wish to take the house, requested leave to do so of Mr. Jackson: M'Rae's view then was to search if any traces could be found of his brother's child;

child ; but Mr. Kirby had taken care none such should be left, except in the concealed chamber, and Sir Robert had carried away, in his last visit, all papers he could find.—The terror the inhabitants of St. Mary's attached to Oakdale, was well known to James, nor was M'Rae ignorant of it ; the hall therefore was judged a safe retreat, and they arrived there a few hours after our heroine, with Mrs. Crofts and Joe, had quitted it. But at Oakdale M'Rae's good, or rather evil genius deserted him ; from the daughter of the man whom he had so cruelly injured, did he meet with his punishment, and by a ball from one of his own pistols, loaded with the most unjustifiable intention, was his guilty soul nearly precipitated into Eternity.—Such instances sometimes occur, and we see the hand of Providence visibly interfering, and behold the guilty punished, unintentionally, by the person they have injured.

## CHAPTER XX.

M'RAE, ere he set out to overtake our heroine, when she was carried off by the fictitious Baron Kaphausen, had charged his pistols with much care—a circumstance observed by one of his servants, who having some idea of what was going forward, and fearful of mischief, had taken out the ball previous to coming up with Dodds, who saw, from M'Rae's agitation and fury, his intention of ridding himself of a person who had him completely in his power. Dodds swore revenge, yet cooling,  
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he followed him, the better to elude suspicion, to Kelso, whsre M'Rae affected to laugh at the fright he had thrown the Baron into, and asked him if he had not played his part admirably. Dodds agreed to go to Kilmraigie, but set out with all speed for Paris, satisfied, as was his principal, that the time was now arrived when one or both must fall. This soon was known by M'Rae, and was the principal cause of his pretended decease.

But it is now time I account to my readers for the long absence of Mr. Kirby, who, after having undergone numerous hardships, returned to his native country a hale old man. At the death of a near relation in America, without children, Mr. Kirby became, by his bequest, heir to a very extensive tract of land, great part of which had been more or less under cultivation. The good surgeon, I have already informed my readers, knew little of the world beyond the circle of St. Mary's, except what trifling knowledge he

had gained in the market town where he served his apprenticeship. Of books, except a few relative to his own profession, he knew nothing ; therefore when he heard of the extent of his new possession, he imagined was he but settled upon it, he should be a richer man than any in the country, and would have more wood upon his estate than the whole Dean and Chapter could claim throughout the Bishopric ; he would fell his timber, and parcel out his estate in small farms : thus did he in idea settle every thing to his own satisfaction. Little did poor Kirby suppose that his timber, situated as it was, could be of little use except for fuel, and that nothing his estate produced was marketable within some days journey ; but besides the idea of returning with a fortune that would render him independent, he imagined it would then be in his power to adopt Alicia.

Frank, who had lived as gardener at Oakdale, where he had married the faithful

Patty, went (my readers will perhaps remember) to America, previous to Mrs. Bouchier's death. This honest couple, after many difficulties, had arrived to some degree of opulence, and were settled in the adjoining plantation to that which, at the death of his kinsman, had become Mr. Kirby's. Frank therefore it was, who had transmitted the account to Mr. Kirby, which was sent from New York, whither his affairs had taken him ;—in this letter he spoke of having met, about half a year before, with a person of the name of Meynel, who had a plantation about sixty miles north. Frank said the name had struck him, together with a strong likeness which he bore to the family of Bertram, and when he went home and told his wife, she was convinced it was Mr. Meynel, Sir Robert Bertram's sister's son. Mr. Meynel, Frank said, was married, but had no family, and that at his return from New York he, with his wife, meant to visit Mr. and Mrs. Meynel. It was the hope of seeing in this lady, the person who alone could

give the information regarding the birth of Eliza, which urged the sanguine-tempered Kirby to so long a voyage, and so troublesome a journey ; as in London he received more just ideas of the value of his possessions.

Safely Mr. Kirby landed at New York, where, by the care of Frank, a proper person was engaged to attend him across the provinces through which he had to travel ; and without any thing material happening to retard his journey, he reached the house of his old acquaintances ; and scarce had he patience to rest himself, or do what was needful regarding his own affairs, till, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Laws, (alias Frank and Patty) he set out for Meynel's farm, where he now learnt, from his friends, dwelt the nephew of Sir Robert Bertram, whose wife was, to Patty's utter astonishment, the person who at St. Mary's she had known as Miss Wetherall. An explanation was soon asked by the impatient Kirby, and given by Mrs. Meynel, regarding the birth

birth of Eliza, with the change of children, and her reasons for so doing; also the method employed by the supposed brother of Mr. Mackenzie, for the concealment of a child that then was not in existence; but the gifts of Miss M'Raे, as Mr. Mackenzie's mother, were too lucrative for Mrs. Meynel to undeceive her. Mrs. Meynel also had other reasons for concealment; her husband, whilst any correspondence was kept up, had uniformly commanded a strict observance of the oath he had caused her to take, and when this dissipated young man, about the period Mr. Barlow fixed at Woodcraft in the vale of Oakdale, utterly deserted her, Mrs. Meynel could not bring herself to disclose to her father the painful truth, which, notwithstanding, she did to Mrs. Meynel, her husband's mother, who at that time resided at Oakdale. Mr. Meynel, in answer to his mother's remonstrance on the subject, protested in one of his letters to her, that if she persisted in wishing him to declare his marriage, he would never either visit or write to

her. Terrified by this threat, from a son on whom she doated, Mrs. Meynel acquiesced, and continued to support him in the same lavish style at Paris he then was figuring as *mi Lor Anglois*.

Mrs. Meynel had, at this time, the disposal of her and Mildred's fortune; and whilst she lived at Oakdale with the strictest economy, her misplaced indulgence supported her son in dissipation. By this means, at the death of Mrs. Mildred Bertram, Mrs. Meynel saw she must for ever forfeit her brother's good opinion, and remain dependent on him, by producing the will of her aunt, as the fund from whence her annuity was to be paid, was already expended on her son; another will was therefore produced, signed by Mildred a few days before her death, and which she imagined was a paper of a different kind. In this Mrs. Meynel was sole heir to her aunt's property; the real will, and Mildred's confession, were allowed to remain where she had placed them,

them, lest it should at any future period be found necessary to produce them. Again was Mr. Meynel urged by his mother to return, and the request was accompanied by a hint, that if he did not, his wife and child should be acknowledged at Oakdale ; he promised to comply, but repeated delays proved he had no wish to fulfil that promise. A claim was made, soon after Mildred's death, upon her landed property, which it was found she had no right to bequeath, it devolving at her decease, without children, to the heir at law.

Mrs. Meynel now saw she had, for an improvident and disobedient son, deprived herself of the means of subsistence. To Sir Robert she was ashamed to apply, though on the score of injustice she had salved her conscience at the time of concealing her aunt's will, by thinking her nephew's income was already too ample to need any addition, and that the clause respecting the child of Robert Bertram and Eliza Bouchier was an unnecessary one, as neither that child nor its

its posterity were in all probability in existence ; but her folly, her guilt now stared her in the face, and added to the grief she had long sustained regarding her son, a quick decline took place, and Mrs. Meynel died without gathering resolution to acquaint her nephew with these circumstances.

At the death of Mrs. Meynel, her daughter-in-law collected what valuables she had left, and acquainting her father with her marriage, was preparing to set off to seek her husband, when she received a letter from him, dated Bristol, wherein, begging her forgiveness, he entreated she would hasten to him, as he was ill. To Bristol instantly Mrs. Meynel went, and found her late gay dissipated husband a prey to disease and wretchedness. The care she bestowed, and the relief she brought, promoted his recovery, when learning his mother's death, and the smallness of the sum which she had left, by a formal bequest, to Mrs. Meynel, as Miss Wetherall, he proposed going to America.

America. To this his wife objected, pleading her child, and urged him to declare their situation to Sir Robert, who would, she was certain, relieve them; but Mr. Meynel was fixed; the child Eliza was not known to be the descendant of the Bertrams, nor would he stoop, by acknowledging it, to receive favours from Sir Robert Bertram.

The good Baronet, who was not much older than his nephew Meynel, had, for a length of time, supported him with large sums, after he had spent that money which, upon his coming of age, Sir Robert presented him with; and at length, wearied with repeated applications for money, which was spent without thought, in gay habits of expensive dissipation, the Baronet had refused to support Mr. Meynel, and after that, irritated by his conduct, dropped all correspondence with him. Mr. Meynel, with his wife, therefore embarked for America, without even her father being in such full possession of the story which could enable him to reveal

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it to Sir Robert. From New York Mrs. Meynel wrote to her father, and soon after had, with her husband, accompanied some other adventurers, who formed the settlements amongst which Mr. Kirby found himself, at a distance of a vast number of miles from any regular cultivated, or well-peopled country.

## CHAPTER XXI.

THE good surgeon of St. Mary's now related to Mrs. Meynel the history of her daughter, and the fatal mistake caused by the narrative of Mrs. Mildred Bertram, with the uncertainty of Mr. Bouchier's fate, who doubtless had been a man of fortune, if not rank; the story was at length concluded, by informing her under whose protection the young Alicia had been placed by Mrs. Dalrymple. Mrs. Meynel at this time laboured under an ague, to which these new settled countries subjected its inhabitants, and

and Mr. Kirby, when he returned to his own plantation, left her, from the agitation she had undergone, exceedingly ill.

It was determined by her husband and Kirby to endeavour at disposing of their property to some of the new adventurers (which every season then arrived from Britain) and return home. A year elapsed, during which Mr. Kirby had written to Alicia, and her friends Mrs. Dalrymple and Mr. Meynel; but these letters, owing to the uncertain conveyance, never reached England. Mrs. Meynel at last fell a sacrifice to her disorder; she died about the same time the following year after Mr. Kirby had first visited her in America. Anxiously did the worthy surgeon look forward to the period of his return to England, when about three months after Mrs. Meynel's decease these hopes sunk.— A party of Indians from beyond the Ohio attacked by night the house of Mr. Kirby, plundered, and then set fire to what they could not carry away, making him accompany

party their retreat, which was effected ere the mischief was known to the adjacent settlers. This account, my readers may perhaps recollect, reached our heroine in London, when Mr. Meynel returned from Scotland, where he had seen Mrs. Dalrymple; it merely varying in this—Kirby was supposed to have fallen an immediate sacrifice to the fury of these savages, with whom (on his profession being made known) he became a person of great importance. The fame of his skill was widely diffused, and he was sent, as occasion required, with all possible accommodation, from one place to another, till he had travelled to the back of Canada, whither he had gone to cure an Indian Chief. This being done, a deputation arrived from their brothers upon Lake Superior, where the presence of the great doctor was solicited by the Chief, who had been wounded in battle. Thither went Kirby grumbling, and discontented at his fate, which seemed for ever to preclude all possibility of escape: He found the wounded

Chief

Chief surrounded by his principal warriors ; nor, as the great doctor passed into the wigwam, did he pay any attention to the attendants by whom the sick chief was surrounded, nor was it till the cure was nearly completed, that to his astonishment, and mingled joy and grief, he once more beheld Mr. Bouchier, whom my readers will remember some preceding pages ago we quitted in the station in which Kirby found him. The Earl instantly recollect<sup>ed</sup> the face, voice, and manner of Kirby in the great doctor, who had repeatedly passed him, without even remarking him as an European ; but so well aware was he of the danger attending a discovery to a person so warm in his feelings, and so little guarded in his manner as Kirby, that he concealed his emotions on the sight of a man whose appearance so highly interested, and so deeply agitated him, till a period when he could safely do so ; yet, even at this chosen opportunity, the Earl had much difficulty in composing Kirby, who for some time gave way to all  
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the extravagance of joy, after it had taken place of incredulity and astonishment ; nor was it till sorrow for his friend's situation recalled him to his senses, that the Earl could make him comprehend how necessary it was to conceal both their former knowledge and present connexion with each other ; nor did the Earl, who was now taught prudence, venture on another interview, till he pretended sickness, at a time when the whole tribe capable of fighting went out on an expedition against some nation that had of late encroached on their hunting limits. The Earl had, previous to this, prepared all for their flight, arms to defend themselves, and as much provision as they could carry. With these, embarking in a canoe, they ventured across the lake, and met with some white traders, from whom (in exchange for a small sum of money which Lord Trewarne had preserved amidst his various dangers) they procured such necessaries as they stood most in need of, particularly clothes, to screen them from the search that doubtless would be

be made for them. After almost incredible hardships, the travellers arrived at Montreal, where the Earl found most fortunately a person to whom he had once been known, who was the son of one of the late Earl's agents, and had, by the Earl of Knasborough's interest, gone out to Canada, with an appointment under Government, immediately upon its being ceded to the English in 1763. In the mercantile line Mr. Eldridge had rose to affluence at Montreal, and Lord Trewarne found him every way disposed to repay, as far as lay in his power, the obligation conferred by him, and his friend the Earl of Knasborough.

At this period Lord Trewarne found it impossible to learn what had become of Mr. Meynel, as America had asserted her independence, and all was in a state of confusion, the British troops at that time laying at Halifax. Amply supplied by Mr. Eldridge, the Earl and Mr. Kirby set out on their return home; sailing down the river St.

Laurence,

Laurence, they reached Quebec, where they again embarked on board a ship bound to London. After a voyage peculiarly favourable, once more did the wanderers behold their native shores, and immediately upon quitting the vessel went to the house occupied by Mr. Meynel at the time Mr. Kirby had seen Alicia, previous to his embarking for America; there, though Mr. Meynel had not occupied this house for upwards of a year, they heard he was yet alive, and in good health at his seat in Devonshire, but on enquiring after Miss Sleigh, they learned she had long resided in Sir Robert Bertram's family; that the Baronet was in France, but at his house in Cavendish-square they might learn further particulars.

We will now return to Dodds, whom I informed my readers set out with all speed from Kelso, breathing revenge, and hoping to escape the punishment which he saw suspended over his detestable patron. Already well accustomed to hasty and secret journeys,

in much less time than an honest man could have done, did the ci-devant Baron Kaphausen reach Paris, and introduced himself, with a less exalted title, to the Earl of Knasborough and Sir Robert Bertram; no delay was made, but all instantly set out for England. At Calais, to the astonishment of all but Dodds, they encountered Lord and Lady Morville, with Lady Augusta, slenderly attended; the cause of their journey was disclosed, and Dodds threw, as far as he could, the blame upon M'Rae, who alone reaped the benefit. Henry Bertram, all impatience, had continued with his friends on the journey from Paris till this meeting, when fired at the recital, he could no longer listen to the complicated villainy of M'Rae, and sickening at the thoughts of his beloved Alicia's danger, finding the wind not fair, he left a note informing his parents of the step he intended to take, and crossed in an open boat to Dover, where taking up a newspaper as he waited for horses, the first paragraph he cast his

his eyes upon, was the account of the sudden death of the Earl of Trewarne at Edinburgh. Hoping, yet fearing, Henry Bertram drove to Cavendish-square, supposing, if indeed Alicia had escaped, she would go to some house of Sir Robert's. The news of Miss Sleigh's being at Malieveren had reached the servant who had the charge of the house in Cavendish-square, and thither Henry resolved to go; a fresh carriage and horses had been ordered, and was driving into the square, as the Earl of Trewarne and Kirby alighted at the Baronet's door; the impatient Henry stood on the step ready to get in as the chaise drove up. The question asked by the Earl raised Mr. Bertram's curiosity, nor was it long till such an explanation took place as banished the doubts that had distracted him regarding the birth of Alicia; and in the chaise which Henry alone meant to have pursued his way to Malieveren, was he in less than half an hour seated with the beloved friend of his father, who joyfully owned the late orphan, Alicia,

as his daughter, and Mr. Kirby, the kind guardian of that daughter's infancy. At Malieveren Mr. Bertram was informed by Mrs. Rowley of Miss Sleigh's quitting it, unattended, and immediately supposing she had gone to Oakdale, followed; and so certain was Henry that at the desolate hall would Alicia be found, and so fearful was he of her having similar dangers to encounter in the gloomy passages and vaults that alike threatened his life and reason, that he waited not for further information, but at midnight broke open the door, little thinking that one stood unfastened, through which, a few hours before, M'Rae had been carried in a dying state. Alicia had been sought by Henry in the apartment where she lay concealed from hasty inspection behind a piece of furniture, the key standing in the door giving no room for imagining that apartment contained the object of their search, which, hastily made in the house, was with more diligence renewed in the concealed chambers.

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It is superfluous my repeating the meeting already spoken of between Lord Trewarne and our heroine, nor need I say, perhaps, that when she at Mr. Jackson's introduced Captain Barlow to her new-found parent, she was made acquainted that the affinity which he had claimed upon their first meeting, and which at Oakdale she supposed did not exist, was real, and that Captain Barlow was her mother's maternal uncle; and the worthy and venerable Mr. Meynel, whom she had long revered as a parent, she was in fact a descendant of. From his early marriage, and also that of his son and granddaughter, he had lived to see in Lady Alicia Fitz-Harman, for such we now ought to style our heroine, the fourth generation; nor was he, though a very old man, incapable at this period of participating in the general joy at Oakdale. Captain Barlow, going into Devonshire with the news, was accompanied back by Mr. Meynel, who by M'Rae's arts had been kept ignorant of Alicia, whilst she had, from the same quar-

ter, received false intelligence. Mr. Meynel had never quitted Elmwood for more than a day for the last twelve months, yet declared the journey from thence to Oakdale had not fatigued him.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

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THE hall was, during M'Rae's illness, so crowded, that its former imaginary inhabitants had not even Sir Philip's chamber left for their use; the Earl of Knaresborough and his daughter, with Lord and Lady Morville, came from Malivefen there with Sir Robert and Lady Bertram, and William March,

March, who yet felt the effects of his close imprisonment. At Oakdale then, where almost twenty years before the Earl of Trewarne had been as Mr. Bouchier, was he welcomed to the hearts of the Earl of Knasborough and Sir Robert Bertram, who on his account had so severely suffered. Change of climate and years they saw had wrought great alterations in the appearance of their friend ; but they failed not instantly to recognize in him the voice, the manner, the *soul* of the long-lost, lamented Earl of Trewarne. Thus, though M'Raे had presented to their sight the semblance, had uttered the sentiments of his Lordship, and even the voice in which those sentiments were uttered seemed nearly to possess the same softness, the same full and melodious tone, yet he had, when he returned to England, in order to impose on the world as Lord Trewarne, appeared to Sir Robert and the Earl of Knasborough but as a well-constructed automaton ; for the impostor M'Raē, to render him a Lord Trewarne,

wanted the informing mind that inhabited the body of that nobleman, which makes that indescribable, yet distinguishing, characteristical difference, that is stamped by the Creator of all on every living creature, rational and brute. Thus his friends saw the face, the person, heard almost the same voice deliver in the same manner the very sentiments of Lord Trewarne, yet the voice went not beyond their ears ; it reached not their hearts, which remained unaffected by the well-studied sentiment.

When the Earl of Trewarne had been introduced to William March at Oakdale, his story had been purposely concealed, as it would have been cruel to raise hopes regarding him should they not be realised ; and Dodds's testimony was not, by Sir Robert, in this cause deemed sufficient, without some proof, or at least M'Rae's confession to the same purpose. The Earl gazed on him with wonder, nor when once seen, could he withdraw his eyes, or fix them

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on aught beside. The striking resemblance between this young man and the heir of Sir Robert Bertram has been already mentioned, and Mr. Kirby (who knew no more than the Earl regarding the way in which William had been found by his friends) now restored to his former hilarity, made such observations as he thought proper on the resemblance. The Earl of Trewarne sighed as he heard Kirby pass the light-hearted jest, for to him William March appeared a striking likeness of his beloved Alicia.

These resemblances are sometimes found running in families for several generations, and may be traced in each collateral branch; in few could it be more conspicuous or uniform than in the family of Bertram.—The sons of the late Baronet resembled each other so strongly, that Henry Bertram made no hesitation, upon finding at Oakdale his uncle's portrait, to suppose it was designed for his father, and William March, whose mother was niece to the present

Baronet, and Alicia, to whose mother he was great uncle, were both thought to resemble their cousins, at a time when the relationship was utterly unknown.

When the Earl of Trewarne visited M'Rae, he was accompanied by William March, Alicia, and Dodds ; the impostor concluding all was known, made, as before related, though intermixed with other matter, a full confession of his crimes.— Soon after this recital, which restored William March to a parent, whom, like Alicia, he had never till within the last month beheld, M'Rae was able to travel, and set out to visit his mother, who though alive, was in a state of infirmity.

On Dodds the Earl of Trewarne settled an annuity, which was to increase according as he behaved. James, the late servant of Sir Robert, with some other of M'Rae's emissaries, enlisted into a regiment on the point of embarking for America, where, at the

the first opportunity, they deserted, and through the gold procured by their iniquity had a good reception ; with it they commenced planters, but I do not think, with habits so depraved, they would exert that industry which in such a situation is needful.

Captain Barlow had, ere this, informed his new friends at Oakdale, that at the time of the news of his death reaching St. Mary's, he was slowly recovering from those wounds that had been supposed fatal in the field of battle. Ashamed of his former conduct, he had become sober and regular, and resolved not to contradict the account his comrade had sent, unless he had it in his power to assist the parent his extravagance had been the principal means of reducing to poverty. Ardently bent upon fulfilling the duties of his profession, Captain Barlow had from the ranks, by gradual and well-deserved promotion, reached the post he now held.— Visiting St. Mary's, when made a Lieutenant, he had spent a night in wandering

around Oakdale, where his lamented niece had fallen a sacrifice to her grief; and Alicia judged, from comparing dates, that it was Captain Barlow whom, on the night she had slept in Sir Philip's chamber, she saw walking on the terrace.

At Oakdale, soon after M'Rae quitted St. Mary's, the friends separated. The Earl of Trevarne, with his son (now Lord St. Andrews) and our heroine, with her uncle Barlow and Mr. Bertram, set out for the Castle of Kilcraigie; whilst Mr. Meynel and Kirby accompanied the Baronet and his Lady to Malieveren;—with them also went the Earl of Knaresborough and Lady Augusta, as did Lord and Lady Morville, who, if their parents would have listened, would have made public promises of alteration of conduct; but they were told resolutions were easy broke through, if not guarded by fortitude; yet that it was hoped the lesson they had received would serve them through life. M'Rae had made all the restitution

in his power, and Malton House was already, by the command of Sir Robert, nearly refurnished, and when finished, its owners were to quit Malieveren, and resume their old habitation, at which time Sir Robert was to give Lord Morville the thirty thousand pounds talked of when he first offered himself to Miss Bertram.

At Kilcraigie were found the remains of M'Raे's former establishment, and the Castle totally unfit for the reception of Alicia. The party therefore took up their abode for the night at the nearest town, from whence our heroine, accompanied by her brother and Mr. Bertram, crossed the country to Ayr, in which town Mrs. Dalrymple (now a widow) had lived upon a very limited income since the death of her father. As she was clasped to the grateful heart of our heroine, joy and wonder took full possession of her; and when she next offered up her prayers to the almighty Disposer of events, she was not unthankful for having been made the

the means of preserving the amiable Alicia from the evils which must otherwise have overwhelmed her at Oakdale. Warmly did the daughter of Lord Trewarne urge her first kind benefactress to accompany her to Ma lieveren ; this request was seconded with equal earnestness by Mr. Bertram : “ You are now, my dear Mrs. Dalrymple, well known, and already highly esteemed by the party there ; Lady Bertram will not excuse our returning without bringing you with us, who were the cause of her knowing Lady Alicia.” Mrs. Dalrymple spoke not, and Alicia fearing she yet hesitated, renewed her intreaties—

“ You must see my father, my dear friend ; if you do not accompany us, he will have to travel from Edinburgh to thank you for your kindness to his child. Your venerable friend, Mr. Meynel, to whom you are also a relation—sure you will not refuse him ! Miss Dalrymples too can come from Clapham to embrace you ; no, you will not, you cannot refuse your Alicia !”

It was not possible, and at the appointed time this kind protectress of our heroine accompanied her to Edinburgh, where soon arrived the Earl of Trewarne and Captain Barlow, having disposed of the late inhabitants of Kilcraigie in such a way as promised reformation to the elder, and better information to the younger. At this city Alicia again, by her friends' request, repeated her escape from M'Rae, whose arts, with Alicia's danger and presence of mind, were alike topics of discourse, and subjects for reflection. Without cause for fear, and with a grateful and happy heart, our heroine set out with her friends upon the same road she had about two months before so hastily, fearfully, and anxiously travelled alone.— When they reached Malieveren, they found Lord and Lady Morville had already taken possession of their house at Malton, but the rest of the party that had been at Oakdale yet remained at the Castle.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

ALREADY do my readers know the mutual attachment between Lady Augusta Morville and William March, to which name, given at the font by Sir Robert, was now added that of Fitz-Harman Mackenzie, Lord St. Andrews. This attachment between his Lordship and Lady Augusta, which commenced during a visit at Lady Wolverhampton's, had not, on Lady Augusta's part, yielded to

to absence ; nor had she, notwithstanding her endeavours, been able to banish the recollection of William March, whom she knew and loved as most amiable. Her heart revolted at his idea in the depraved state in which it was supposed he lived ; yet still she secretly cherished the passion for an imaginary being, for the youth she had allowed to gain her fondest affections ; and the William March she had loved since she first saw him at her aunt's, still possessed her heart, divided from the man abandoned to vice, who claimed the title and estates of Malieveren. If then still he continued to possess the heart of Lady Augusta, surrounded as she was by admirers of rank, wealth, and accomplishments, supposing their regard equal, it will not appear wonderful, that in the heart of the unfortunate son of Lord Trewarne she yet reigned triumphant ; for, except the artful snares of Miss Boysville, who would gladly have seen the heart of her victim captivated by the charms of the beautiful Mademoiselle Durand, he had little tempt-

temptation to swerve from his allegiance.—It was the idea of Lady Augusta which irradiated the gloom of his prison ; it was the love he felt for her, that by agitating his soul with various passions, kept the unfortunate Lord St. Andrews from sinking into mental imbecility. Hope—fear—jealousy assailed him by turns ; now he dwelt on her perfections, and as he thought of her nobleness of soul, her steady uniformity of character, he would fondly flatter himself, should he ever regain his liberty, that his beloved Augusta would still listen, as before, to his vows.—When William found himself again restored to freedom, and learned he was principally obliged to the noble father of Lady Augusta for it, he felt the full weight of obligation—he felt his inferiority—the vast disproportion of situation between him and the object of his love, (which if possible was increased) and freely would have sacrificed all further hopes, whatever it might have cost him, if it would have promoted her happiness, or had the Earl required it, who had visited

France

France with very different intentions, having promised his daughter, that was William March found, and proved innocent of the alledged charges, he would ratify the choice she had made by his consent.

I noticed not the meeting at Calais between this charming couple, as at that time it would have called off the attention from the heroine of my tale ; nor shall I, at a period when so many weeks had since elapsed, attempt to describe it. I shall likewise pass over the triumphant joy that extended the heart of William, when at St. Mary's Oak the infamous M'Rae fully disclosed his birth ; as the son of the Earl of Trewarne he would not disgrace the alliance of the Earl of Knasborough, who would gladly receive, as the husband of his daughter, the heir of his beloved and highly esteemed friend.

Preferring what he deemed his duty, Lord St. Andrews attended his father into Scotland, instead of following what his inclinations

tions urged him to, accompanying Lady Augusta to Malieveren, at which place, when he again arrived, he appeared to have completely recovered the effects of his long imprisonment, by having regained his health and strength, as also had Mr. Bertram, now relieved from his late anxiety.

The Earl of Knaresborough, with Mr. Meynel, urged that the nuptials of Lord St. Andrews and his sister, with Lady Augusta and Henry Bertram, should take place at Malieveren, which the Earl of Trewarne objected to, till by having investigated his affairs, he could know what fortune to set aside for Lady Alicia; and Sir Robert and Lady Bertram also wished the marriage of their son deferred till he took the title of Lord Malieveren, which, so long borne by his maternal ancestors, was expected would be granted by his Majesty immediately upon the meeting of Parliament. Under these resolutions Alicia remained passive; for as she found at Malieveren her days glide away

away so serenely happy, she feared whatever change took place might lessen, though it could not increase, her present happiness.

A circumstance at this period reached the Earl of Trewarne, which was communicated by a letter from Mr. Eldridge, who, by dint of enquiry, had learned that Mr. Meynel (the father of Eliza, the last Countess of Trewarne, our heroine's mother) had engaged on the side of the Americans, and fallen in one of the first encounters. The mourning which was to be worn on this occasion was highly unsuitable to wedding gaiety, and was a further cause of the nuptials being postponed, although it was not to be supposed any deep or lasting grief could be felt for the death of a man whose misconduct had been one principal cause of Eliza's and Lord Trewarne's misfortunes, as also those which so narrowly threatened the infancy of Alicia. Mr. Meynel's life had at no period afforded happiness to his connexions; early indulged by his mother, whose

whose character well agreed with what Mildred Bertram said of the family, the easiness of whose tempers would rather submit to imposition, than make exertion, Mr. Meynel had gone from one excess to another.— Soon after the news reached Malieveren of his son's death, Mr. Meynel was anxious to return home; Trewarne House was ready for its Lord's reception, and thither the Bertrams with their guests went, after staying on their road a few days with Mr. Meynel at Elmwood, who soon followed to Trewarne. Pleading his advanced age as the cause of his earnestness for the marriage of his great-granddaughter Alicia, upon whom he had settled his ample possessions at his decease, Lord Trewarne's former objection no longer existed; and Mr. Bertram having received the long-expected title of Malieveren, Sir Robert and Lady Bertram were anxious for the nuptials of their son, which were now only postponed till the arrival of Lord and Lady Morville from Malton Park, where her Ladyship had given an heir

to

to her Lord. Two days after they reached Trewarne House, our heroine became Lady Malieveren, at which time Lady Augusta joined her hand to that of Lord St. Andrews. In these unions interest and equal circumstances had, when little expected, ranged themselves on the side of Love ; for when the son and daughter of Lord Trewarne engaged the hearts of Lady Augusta Morville and Mr. Bertram, interest was not consulted, and the disparity of circumstances were obvious ; yet then, regarding the happiness of that son, who had placed his affections on so amiable an object, Sir Robert and Lady Bertram gave a free consent, and no sooner did the Earl of Knasborough learn his daughter had made choice of a lover so highly deserving as William March, than he sanctioned it by his approbation ; when lo ! Providence seemed to bless this purposed match, and the late deserted orphans were found to draw their existence from noble lineage, and were heirs to large fortunes.

The

The ancient and almost ruinous castle of Fitz-Harman in Gloucestershire was put into repair for the nominal residence of Lord and Lady Malieveren ; Kilcraigie Castle, with the whole of the St. Andrews estates, were given by Lord Trewarne to his son upon his marriage, where, during a part of every summer, they intended to reside. A small but elegant house was purchased by the Earl of Knaresborough in the vicinity of Acornbank, and presented to Lady Augusta, in which neighbourhood Lord Trewarne had also a small estate, which he gave to our heroine ; by those means the families were much together, Trewarne House and Malieveren Castle having accommodation with ease for them when united. Mr. Kirby remained attached for life to the Earl of Trewarne. Mrs. Dalrymple, at the request of the worthy Mr. Meynel, took up her abode, with her two daughters, under his roof ; he lived enjoying his faculties, and a tolerable portion of strength, till he reached the age of eighty-five, long before

before which he had seen the fifth generation of his descendants.

At the close of the American war Captain Barlow quitted the service, and fitted up a house on the small estate he purchased in Cumberland, where he however seldom resided. At Mr. Meynel's death, who left Mrs. Dalrymple, as also her children, legacies, that lady retired to a house built and furnished some time before by that good old man for her use, and soon after consented to her friend's wishes, by becoming the wife of Captain Barlow.

Lord and Lady Moryville, meeting at Calais with the Earl of Wolverhampton, he returned to England with them, and soon learning the disappointment of his hopes, again went to the Continent, where, after travelling for two years, he returned, and met at the house of Lord St. Andrews, in London, with Miss Dalrymple, whose beauty and amiable qualities made such an impression on his Lordship's heart, as determined him

to offer with it his hand to the lovely girl, who forming no objection to his Lordship's suit, soon after became Countess of Wolverhampton.

The Marquis and Marchioness of Felton did not return to England as Duke and Duchess of Wakefield, till Alicia had been Lady Malieveren almost two years. The former friendship with our heroine and her Lord was happily renewed. Lady Morville is now mother to a large and promising family, amongst whom she is perfectly domesticated ; his Lordship has a large portion of the Malton estate under his own cultivation, which though perhaps not the most economical plan, yet has rendered the country around a perfect garden. Lord Morville is still famous for his breed of horses, but they are now of a more useful race than those he kept when first known to our readers ; and thus does his Lordship employ his mind, which is too active to allow his body to remain in a state of lassitude. Con-

stantly is he, as before, engaged, but more usefully, nor is her Ladyship without a wish, as before, to excel; but it is now in the arrangement of her household, and her chief vanity is in the opening beauty of her daughters. At present Sir Robert, (who has given up his seat in Parliament) with his Lady, seldom leave the Castle of Malieveren. The good Baronet resolved, soon after he learned the crimes which the concealed chambers at Oakdale Hall had been the scene of, to pull it down, as he wished no memento should remain; but her Ladyship proposed, as the hall was by no means ruinous, that the concealed apartments alone should be demolished, and that the house should be turned into an hospital for a certain number of old men and women, decayed housekeepers, for which endowment she offered the savings of that part of her fortune which had been appropriated to her own use. Sir Robert agreed, only insisted half the endowment should be his. The plan was immediately put into execution.—

The bodies of the unfortunate Mr. and Mrs. Bertram, with that of Mildred, were privately interred, after which the concealed apartments were pulled down, and the rubbish taken to fill up the vaults and entrance to the subterranean passages ; the curious piece of mechanism was removed from Sir Philip's chamber, and its terrors vanished. The hall is now the hospital of Oakdale, and the name of Bertram is revered in the fertile vale.

My readers will perhaps wish to know, whilst our heroine and her brother are enjoying as unallayed happiness as falls to the lot of mortality, what fate has attended the infamous M'Rae and his principal abettors. Miss M'Rae abandoned herself to the practice of constant intoxication when she learned all her schemes were overthrown, and herself and son exposed to infamy ; in this state she lived a short time, and at length died in consequence of a fall.—At this period the woman who had assisted

M'Rae

### SOLEMN INJUNCTION.

M'Rae in concealing the son of Lord Tre warne (William March) now came forward with a full declaration. M'Rae staid not long in Britain, after quitting St. Mary's Oak ; having wrote to Lord Trewarne, thanking him for his kindness to the late inhabitants of Kilcraigie, and saying he could not support his ignominy where his crimes were so publicly known, he requested his annuity might be payable to him on the Continent. To this the Earl objected not, and in the territories of the Venetians M'Rae took up his abode for some time ; he then passed into Turkey, and became an inhabitant of Adrianople, where, had he not been deterred by the ceremonious ritual of Mahometanism, he had become a Muffelman. In Turkey the news of the French revolution reached him, and he hastened to a scene for which his talents fitted him for a performer. Under the reign of the sanguinary Robespierre, distinguished by a French name, M'Rae cut no inconsiderable figure ; he outlived the fall of the tyrant, and

## **SOLEMN INJUNCTION.**

If I am not misinformed, is still acting part upon the great theatre of that nation, with no small degree of power and eclat.

Far different was the fate of Dodds, whose income depending on his alteration of conduct, became a constant attendant upon the Methodists, amongst whom he has received the saving grace, and is, according to his own words, one of the elect—

## **A PURE SOUL WITHOUT SIN.**



**F I N I S.**

